

BOYS, READ THE RADIO ARTICLES IN THIS NUMBER

No. 978

JUNE 27, 1924

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# FAME <sup>AND</sup> FORTUNE WEEKLY.

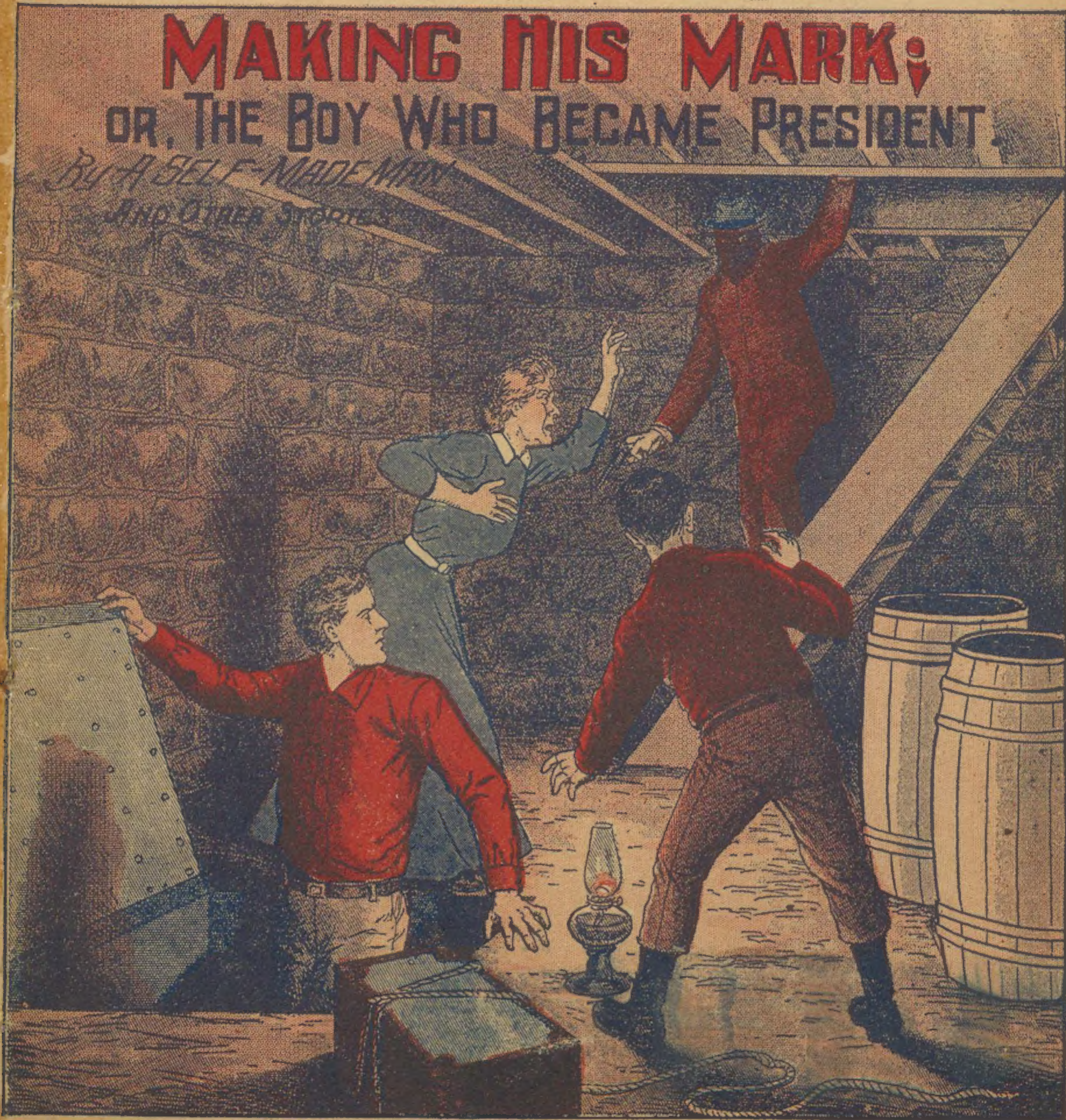
## STORIES OF BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.

### MAKING HIS MARK;

### OR, THE BOY WHO BECAME PRESIDENT.

*By A SELF-MADE MAN*

*AND OTHER STORIES*



A masked man, with a revolver in his hand, came down the steps. "Aha!" he exclaimed, with a smothered imprecation. "I've caught you, have I?" Mrs. Tarbox uttered a cry of dismay, while Johnny looked the picture of terror.







# FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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## MAKING HIS MARK

### OR, THE BOY WHO BECAME PRESIDENT

By A SELF-MADE MAN

#### CHAPTER I.—The Ghost of the Old Mill.

"It's rainin', Vic!" exclaimed Johnny Tarbox, a stout, freckle-faced youth of eleven years. "I knowed it would."

His companion, a stalwart, good-looking lad of seventeen, whose name was Victor Bell, held out the back of his hand and a big drop of moisture fell upon it.

"You're right, Johnny; I'm afraid we're in for it after all. I thought we could beat it out, for we only had a mile to walk to reach your house."

The hour was nine in the evening, and the landscape was lonesome and deserted. Victor Bell was an orphan and boarded with Mrs. Tarbox, Johnny's mother. He was employed by a manufacturing company as shipping clerk, and was regarded by the manager as an unusually smart boy. Vic was very fond of outdoor sports, though business prevented him from devoting as much time to athletic exercises as he wished. He was a member of a yacht and rowing club, which had a club-house on the upper reaches of the Harlem River. He was also a crack boxer, and few of his associates cared to put on the gloves with him, owing to his slugging abilities.

Among other things, Vic enjoyed a good walk, and that afternoon he had accompanied Johnny Tarbox, who had a message to carry from his mother to her sister, and the boys had stayed to supper at Spuyten Duyvil. When they set out on their return home the reflections of lightning above the distant horizon, and the far-off mutterings of thunder, warned them of an approaching storm.

"We'll get soaked t'rough and t'rough if we go on," grumbled the small boy, as the drops began to come down faster and faster each moment, and the souging wind gave signs of developing into a smart gale. "Let's run over to the mill and get in out of the wet."

The mill in question was a relic of Revolutionary days, and had long since been abandoned to idleness and the encroachments of time. It is no longer in existence. The mill itself, with foundations of solid stone, and its upper works of good live oak, had withstood the storms of more than a century in pretty good shape. Like many other ancient edifices it had acquired the

reputation of being haunted by the ghost of the original miller, who, tradition said, was a pretty bad sort of fellow.

It was a lucky thing for the boys that the ancient mill was at hand, for barely had they dashed inside of the doorless opening of the first floor when the thunder-storm swooped down upon them in all its fury.

"This is a corker for fair," said Vic, as he glanced out into the night and saw the rain descending in sheets swished about by the high wind which accompanied the storm.

"Bet your life it is," responded Johnny; "but I don't care as long as I ain't out in it."

"This is a fine night for the old Dutch miller to make his rounds of the mill," grinned Vic.

"Ho!" ejaculated Johnny, contemptuously. "I don't believe no sich stuff."

Hardly were the words out of his mouth before there came up from the foundations of the building the sound of machinery in motion, intermingled with a steady thump, thump, like that given off by a stamping-mill.

"What the dickens is that?" exclaimed Vic, in a tone of some astonishment. "It sounds like the rumbling of machinery under this floor."

Johnny made no answer. He didn't seem as confident as before. As a matter of fact he was a bit scared. Vic, however, was blessed with strong nerves, and believed that there was always a natural cause for every effect, however unaccountable.

"Seems rather mysterious, doesn't it, Johnny?" he said, calmly.

"Maybe dere's some one in the cellar poundin' away at somet'in'," answered Master Tarbox, edging nearer to the door, as if he thought it would be advantageous to be close to the opening in case it became necessary for any reason to scoot.

"I don't see why any one should be down in the cellar of this old rookery, nor can I imagine what he could be pounding at."

"Wow! Look dere!" cried the boy, pointing his finger toward a doorless opening as a flash of electricity illuminated every corner of the room.

Vic looked, and truly it seemed as if some impalpable object, resembling a man, melted away before his eyes.



"What did you see, Johnny?" he asked.

"I seen a man's face. An old man wit' white hair and goggle eyes, standin' in dat door," fluttered the little fellow, now thoroughly frightened.

Vic was willing to believe that the boy had seen something, for he was conscious of a similiar impression; but that it was a ghost did not strike him favorably.

"I'll tell you what, Johnny, it's my opinion there are tramps in this old mill. At any rate, I'm going to find out for sure."

"I wouldn't if I was you," replied Johnny nervously. "Dey might kick de stuffin' out of you."

"You stay here, Johnny, while I go and see what I can see."

"Better take dat piece of wood dere to defend yourself wit'," suggested the youth, pointing at a club-like object which lay against one of the walls.

Vic picked it up and started for the door where the apparition, if such it was, had appeared. At that moment the sounds below ceased as suddenly as they began, and not a sound was to be heard to disturb the death-like stillness of the place, save the occasional crash of the thunder without, the wild sweep of the wind, and the rain beating against the sides and roof of the mill. Vic came to a pause at the door and looked into the dense darkness beyond. The stoppage of the mysterious noise below, and the intense stillness which ensued, rather disconcerted him.

All of a sudden, while he stood there undecided what he had best do, there smote upon his ear, as well as Johnny's, a most unearthly cry, which seemed to penetrate every nook and corner of the old building. It died away in a solemn wail, and all was silent and death-like as before.

To say that Vic was startled would hardly be telling the truth. As for Johnny, he leaned up against the wall near the door, a very badly frightened boy. A heavy clap of the receding thunder now shook the building. Vic drew back into the corner away from the door, while Johnny began to shiver as with the ague, and his eyes stuck out like a lobster's, as some one began to mount the stairs. The "ghost" came on with a thump—thump and clank—clank made by chains, till it reached the door, then it entered the room. The "spook" was a large, broad-shouldered man, all covered with dust and flour. He wore a loose, smock-frock, which reached below his waist, but what struck the sharp-eyed Vic was that this ghost of a hundred years back wore a modern pair of trousers and shoes to match. He carried a lantern, modern, too, in one hand, and a lot of chain in the other, which he clanked as he walked.

Swinging the lantern and shaking his chain, the ghost of the miller started direct for Johnny, apparently unaware that Victor Bell stood in the shadows six feet behind him. Master Tarbox didn't wait for any closer acquaintance, but with a yell of fright, he darted out into the tail end of the storm, and made for the creek as fast as his legs could carry him. The "ghost" went to the door, waved his lantern aloft and shook his chain.

Then he turned about with a sardonical laugh and—removed his face. That is, he took off the papier-mache mask which had covered his human

countenance, revealing himself to be a plain everyday mortal. Tucking it under his arm, he walked to the door by which he had entered, without observing that he had frightened away only one of the two intruders, and Vic soon heard him descending to the cellar beneath.

## CHAPTER II.—In the Cellar of the Old Mill.

"That seems to be a very human ghost after all," chuckled Vic, after the spook had retired to the depths whence he came.

"This place may be the hiding-place for a gang of thieves; and probably they keep their booty here. I'm going to look into this thing. If my idea is correct it will be a feather in my hat to furnish the information that will lead to the capture of a gang of crooks. I might get a reward out of it. That would suit me all right."

Vic removed his shoes and, leaving them near the door, started to feel his way along the dark passage to the stairs. As soon as he located them he began, with extreme caution, to descend. They were pretty solid steps, considering their age, but the boy found several that were loose and creaked under his tread. In a few minutes he reached the foot of the flight. A moldy smell greeted his nostrils, not unlike that from an old vault. He did not dare strike a match, lest the momentary glare should betray his presence there. So he felt about till his hand rested on a rough board partition.

He followed this slowly along till he came to where it branched off, then he saw a bright light shining through a knot-hole. Applying his eye to the opening, Vic looked in upon an enclosed space in the cellar. Above were the flooring and under beams of the mill, almost completely covered by long, pendant, dirty spiders' webs, while on one side was the high, stone wall that composed the foundation of the building, the other three sides being constructed of comparatively new boards.

In one corner stood a rude kind of machine, like a large grindstone, whose long handle showed that it was worked by hand. Vic, who had a good idea of the uses of machinery in general, examined it narrowly, but could not see what function it was intended to perform, beyond making the wheels on the shaft and counter-shaft go around. In another corner was a bunk provided with a pair of blankets and a mattress, which showed that some one slept in the room. Further away was a small cookstove, while several pans hung from nails driven into the wall. There was also an open cupboard with three shelves in which reposed a few plates, a cup and saucer, knives, forks, spoons, and other articles of a similar nature.

An ordinary kitchen table stood in the center of the enclosure. At this table were seated two men—one of whom was the individual who had just been impersonating the "miller's ghost," while the other was a tall, stalwart man, with a heavy, dark beard, the upper part of his face being hidden by a black mask similar to those worn by crooks when they wish to conceal their identity. Upon the table in front of him lay several steel plates, one of which he had apparently been examining with a magnifying



glass that now stood beside it. Close to the bench stood a machine that resembled a Washington hand printing press, such as is used in large printing offices for taking proofs of engravings.

"I wonder what kind of business these chaps are carrying on here?" Vic asked himself, as his eyes took in everything within his range of vision. "It can't be anything honest, or the workers wouldn't carry it on in the seclusion of this dismal cellar, and then work a fake spook business to scare off intruders. Perhaps they are bank-note counterfeiters. That man at the table seems to have an engraved plate just the size of a bank-note before him. That press yonder may be used to print them. I think the Government authorities ought to be notified about this plant on general principles."

While Vic was examining the rooms with his eyes, his ears were also taking in the conversation going on between the men.

"Well," said the man in the mask, "did you frighten those chaps off?"

"I'll bet I did!" chuckled the companion. "I'll warrant I scared the kid out of a year's growth. The other chap, I fancy, flew on hearing our patent unearthly screech."

"You are certain they are both gone?"

"Sure as death. Both of them are sure to spread the news of what they saw, and the old legend of the miller's ghost will be renewed with sufficient force to keep all stragglers away from here in future. I wouldn't be surprised if an account of this haunted mill got into the Sunday newspapers, with appropriate illustrations. That machine in the corner gives a first-class imitation of the rumbling of mill machinery in motion. It was a great idea of mine, wasn't it?"

"It was pretty clever," nodded the man, who seemed to be the head and front of whatever enterprise was carried on in the cellar of the mill. "Now, look here, Bender, as the object of this plant is now practically accomplished, you will, of course, see the necessity of getting rid of every bit of evidence that might subsequently involve either of us in trouble. The plates," continued the masked man, tapping those on the table, "are all in good condition, and it may be advantageous to preserve them. So just fetch that strong-box from the inner room and place them in it for safe-keeping."

"All right, sir," replied the other, respectfully, rising from his stool and entering the far room.

He presently returned, dragging an oblong oak box, ornamented with heavy brass corner-pieces, and studded with a great number of brass-headed nails. He threw up the cover and took out a number of pieces of chamois skin. Then lifting the plates one by one from the table he wrapped them in the soft chamois and packed them in the bottom of the box.

"Now," said the masked individual, reaching down and picking up a good-sized package from the floor at his feet, "here are the original treasury bonds of the Duplex Manufacturing Company, bearing the real official signatures—the bogus ones, with the counterfeit signatures, are now in the company's safe, and in a day or two will be sent to Wall Street to be sold, in pursuance of the resolution of the board of directors at their last meeting, authorizing the sale of the balance of the \$250,000 of Issue A in order to realize \$150,000 needed to enlarge their plant

and market a newly invented machine, the patent of which they have just acquired."

"I suppose you want to place them in this box, too, until you are ready to dispose of them?" said his associate.

"Precisely," replied the other, handing him the package, which the man immediately deposited in the box, nearly filling it.

"Now," went on the masked man, taking a small packet from an inside pocket, "I have here \$50,000 in good American money, which the president of the company deposited in the office safe this afternoon. His intention is to use it tomorrow to pay for a plot of land he bought a month ago. I'm afraid, however, that he will be disappointed," and something very like a chuckle issued from his bearded mouth.

The speaker opened the packet and exhibited several layers of bills just as they had come from the bank.

"I am now in a position to pay you the \$5,000 I agreed to give you for your skilled labor in this scheme. As, however, I don't wish to lose sight of you for a little while, I have decided to pay you only \$1,000 on account at present, and hand you the balance later on."

His companion looked disappointed at this announcement.

"You needn't feel put out, Bender. You know our understanding was you were not to be paid until I began to realize on the bonds."

"That's true, sir; but that was because you did not see your way toward raising the money any other way. Now that you have come unexpectedly into possession of a big sum like \$50,000, you can afford to settle up on the nail. In fact, you ought to act liberally in this matter and double the \$5,000."

"Why should I?" asked the masked man, coldly.

"Because you yourself have admitted that my work has surpassed your expectations."

"That is true, Bender. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you a bonus of \$2,000, and pay it now. The \$5,000 I'll pay you later."

"I'm satisfied, sir."

"Very well," said the other, bending down, placing the packet of money in the box and locking it. "Now help me to place this out of harm's way."

The bearded man seized the lamp in one hand, and one of the handles of the box in the other, while Bender grabbed the other handle, then they started for a door in the partition behind which Vic was concealed.

### CHAPTER III.—One of the Ways By Which Victor Bell Expected to Make His Mark

Vic saw them coming and hastily struck a match in order to find some place where he could conceal himself. Close to the stairs stood a number of empty barrels. Into one of them he popped himself, just in the nick of time. The door in the partition flew open and the two men, with the lamp and box, came out into the wide passageway. The man with the mask led the way to a spot midway between the stone walls, and not far from the row of barrels. Here they paused and put down the box.

"You have the rope inside, Bender," said the bearded man; "go and bring it."



While his associates was gone the masked man put down the lamp and, running his fingers over the floor, grasped something and lifted a trap-door, which opened up on hinges. Then he waited for his companion to return. Bender soon reappeared with several yards of stout rope. The other man took it from him, wound one end of it twice around the box, and then they both lowered it into the hole.

"Now, Bender," said the bearded man, "I am going home. Your type cases and printing material, which you purchased as a blind to account for the presence of the press, you had better leave just as they are. Anybody investigating this cellar later on will then surmise that it was utilized by some poor hermit-printer, who carried on a desultory business in this building."

"All right, sir. Whatever you say goes."

"That's all, I guess. Good-night."

"Good-night, sir."

The bearded man handed the lamp to Bender, ascended the steps and left the mill, while the other returned inside the enclosure and bolted the door, leaving Victor Bell outside in the dark.

"Well, if this doesn't beat the Dutch" exclaimed Vic, as he climbed out of the barrel. "I seem to have accidentally got on to a pretty foxy scheme. I wonder who that masked chap is? His voice sounds a bit familiar to me, as if I had heard it more than once before. Why did he keep masked in the presence of his companion, who evidently knows who he is? There seems to be an element of mystery in this affair. The big fellow has not only deposited \$150,000 worth of bogus bonds of the Duplex Manufacturing Company in the company's vault in place of a similar amount of genuine ones, but he has also stolen \$50,000 in money from the office safe. He must be employed by the company in some capacity to enable him to do this in such a slick manner. Now, what officer or employee of the company do I know who is in the position to accomplish such a trick that looks like this chap?"

Vic cudgeled his recollection, but couldn't find an answer to the query.

Vic went to his former peep-hole and looked through the partition. The middle enclosure was shrouded in gloom. The lamp stood in the bench in the far room, and Vic could see Bender packing up his tools. He watched Bender a while, and, believing he would be ready to leave the place soon, he crept back to the ground floor of the mill, put on his shoes, and started for the creek road. In fifteen minutes Victor Bell was at the door of Mrs. Tarbox's cottage. That good woman had heard her son Johnny's highly varnished account of the ghost of the mill, in which, being a person of good, common sense, she put little credence, and was trying to persuade Master John to return to the so-called haunted building with her, in quest of Vic, of whom she thought a great deal, when the subject of their thoughts opened the door and presented himself before them.

"Ho, Vic!" roared Johnny, as soon as he saw our hero, "I thought the ghost had you for sure. How did you get away?"

"You're dreaming, Johnny," chuckled Vic. "There wasn't any ghost."

"Wasn't any ghost!" cried Johnny, incredulously. "Didn't I see it wit' me two eyes?"

"What you saw was a man playing off that he was a spook. That horrible looking face was only a mask he had on over his real countenance."

"Aw, get out!" retorted the Tarbox kid. "Dat was the real ghost of the miller. Do you t'ink I ain't got no eyes? Didn't I see the flour on his jacket? And den w'at about dem awful yells? You heard the spook machinery goin', too, didn't you? Now you say dat dere wasn't no ghost. W'at you take me for?"

"I thought you didn't believe in spooks," laughed Vic. "When we went into the mill at first, and I remarked that it was a fine night for the old Dutch miller to wander about, you said that was all rot."

"I've changed me mind," replied the youth.

"You'd have changed back again if you'd waited and seen what I saw."

"W'at did you see?" asked Johnny, with great interest.

So Vic told Johnny his experience in the old mill and suggested he go along with him to recover the box.

"Nixy. No mill for me," replied Johnny, in an emphatic tone.

Vic assured Johnny that he had no cause to be afraid of revisiting the old mill, as there was not the slightest danger of his seeing a spook of any kind. Mrs. Tarbox also insisted that her son must go along and help drag the box from the cellar, and take the cart along. Finally Johnny yielded a reluctant assent after Vic assured him he would give him a small part of any reward he got from the company.

"How much will you give me—a dollar?"

"Yes, I'll see you get a dollar, all right."

"Den I'll go along wit' you and ma."

He got his cart from the woodshed, into which Vic placed a small kerosene lamp to throw light on their labors, and then the party of three set out for the old mill.

#### CHAPTER IV.—How Vic's Plans Were Blocked.

The night was so fine that none of the party bothered taking any head-gearing along. They followed the creek road, Johnny dragging his cart, and thinking about how he would spend the expected dollar when he got it. When they turned up toward the mill, which looked rather ghost-like in the starlight, Johnny began falling further and further in the rear, for now that he had reached the scene of action his former fears assailed him once more. Vic had to go back and urge him forward.

"I want you two to remain here outside the door until I go down into the cellar and see if the coast is clear," said Bell, when they reached the mill.

He removed his shoes and made his way below like a shadow. Satisfied that the place was deserted, Vic returned to Mrs. Tarbox and Johnny.

"Come along," he said. "Haul your cart inside, Johnny."

Johnny obeyed, though he cast a fearsome look around the dark room. Vic took the lamp out of the cart, lighted it, and led the way to the cellar, followed by Mrs. Tarbox, with the kid bringing up the rear.

"W'at's behind dat partition?" asked Johnny,



"Don't you worry about what's in there," replied Vic, looking for the handle of the trap-door. "There's no spooks there at any rate."

"Dat suits me if dere ain't," grinned the youth, who seemed to have recovered a portion of his courage.

"Here it is," ejaculated Vic, putting down the lamp, grasping an iron ring and, giving a tug, lifted the trap.

He flashed the light down, and there, sure enough, lay the brass-bound oak box, just as the masked man had left it, rope and all. The hole was probably a yard deep. Vic jumped into it, grabbed the rope and tossed the loose end up to the boy.

"Now, Johnny, you and your mother catch hold and haul away, while I shove from down here."

They followed his directions. Vic had just succeeded, with the help of Mrs. Tarbox and Johnny, in landing the heavy box on the floor of the cellar when they were treated to an unpleasant surprise. A masked man, with a revolver in his hand, came down the steps.

"Aha!" he exclaimed, with a smothered oath. "I've caught you, have I?"

Mrs. Tarbox uttered a cry of dismay, while Johnny looked the picture of terror. As for Vic, he recognized the intruder in an instant, and his chagrin was intense.

"Well, what have you people got to say for yourselves?" demanded the bearded man.

"You ought to answer that question yourself," replied Vic, fearlessly, leaping from the hole.

"What do you mean by that?" thundered the man, glaring at him through his mask.

"I mean that you are a forger and a thief, and the proofs are in this box."

"How dare you address such language to me, you young whelp?" the masked man cried, nervously fingering his weapon, as if he had half a mind to use it on the boy.

"You know whether you deserve it or not," replied Vic, who was angry clear through, and perhaps a bit reckless, on account of his failure to get away with the box.

"Get out of this cellar, all of you!" ordered the rascal, threatening them with his revolver.

There was nothing to do but obey, for it was impossible to say how far the man's patience would last. Mrs. Tarbox and Johnny were only too glad to get away now, but Vic followed them grudgingly. The masked man, however, detained the lad, as he put his foot on the steps.

"How did you find out that box was in that hole, and what do you know about its contents?" he hissed.

"I'm not telling everything I know," answered Vic, independently.

With a snarl of rage the masked stranger reversed his revolver and struck the brave boy a stunning blow on the head with the butt. Vic dropped on the stairs like an ox stricken in the shambles and lay there unconscious. The man looked at him a moment, then catching him in his arms carried him to the opposite side of the cellar and laid him upon the floor. Then he went upstairs and saw that Mrs. Tarbox and Johnny were waiting outside of the mill for Vic.

"Leave that wagon and go home," he cried, sternly.

"We are waiting for Victor Bell," said Mrs. Tarbox.

"You needn't wait for him," replied the man, brusquely. "Go!"

They went. The masked man seized the cart and drew it inside. He then returned to the cellar where the lamp still glowed brightly. He took the rope off the box, and with it tied the unconscious Vic hand and foot, so that he could not get away of his own accord. Then he shut down the trap, drew the brass-bound box under the stairs and covered it with one of the empty barrels. He turned the lamp out and left the mill, heading straight for Kingsbridge, after removing the mask from his face and putting it in his pocket. A half-hour's walk brought him to the Kingsbridge Hotel. Going to the desk of this small hostelry he asked the night clerk if Adam Bender was stopping there.

"Yes. He registered an hour or so ago, and was shown to a room on the second floor."

"I want to see him on urgent business," said the bearded man.

The clerk called the night porter and told him to show the gentleman to Room 29 on the second floor. On reaching the room the bearded man rapped loudly on the door.

"Who's there?" demanded Bender.

"Duplex," was the reply, in tones that the skilled engraver and printer recognized at once.

"Come in," he said, opening the door.

The bearded man entered the closed door.

"Don't light up, but put on your clothes and come with me."

## CHAPTER V.—Vic Turns the Tables on the Masked Man.

On their way back to the old mill the bearded man explained to his accomplice what had occurred.

"Do you know of any place in this vicinity where that boy can be safely kept a prisoner until I shall have disposed of the bonds in the market?" he asked Bender.

"The cellar of the mill is the best place I know of," replied his companion.

"That won't do. The police will be sure to search the mill when the boy fails to turn up at his home, for that Mrs. Tarbox will tell all she knows."

Bender suggested several other ways of keeping Victor Bell in subjection for a short period of time, none of which, however, met with his employer's approbation. By that time they arrived at the mill and entered the building.

"I've got to remove the box, too, and it's a pretty heavy thing to handle," said the man with the beard. "That boy fetched a small cart for the purpose of carrying it away and I took possession of it for a like purpose."

"Where are you going to take it to?" asked Bender.

Instead of answering the question, his companion uttered an exclamation of surprise and anger.

"What's the matter?" inquired Bender.

"The cart is gone."

The speaker flashed a match, but the passageway was quite empty.



"Then somebody has been here while you were away," said Bender.

The other rushed downstairs to the cellar and struck another match. His worst fears were realized. His prisoner was gone, and not even the rope with which he had been bound was left behind.

"That woman and her son must have come back and released him," snarled the big rascal.

"And have they taken the box?" asked Bender.

The bearded man went to the barrel under which he had left the brass-bound box and to his rage found that gone also. The two men examined the stairs closely and found marks that showed the box had been pushed or dragged up to the floor above. Then they saw where the cart had been brought to the head of the flight for the purpose, of course, of loading the heavy box upon it.

The track of the wheels could be plainly seen in the dust. They were able to follow the narrow wheel-marks right along down the road, till they noted where they turned off up a side street. Here they almost lost sight of them, but by patient scrutiny they recovered the tracks, and with some difficulty traced them directly to the Widow Tarbox's house.

"Well, we've got the box located at any rate," said the bearded man. "The next thing will be to recover it. There's \$47,000 cold cash in it, besides those bonds. If this bond scheme is going to be a failure after all, I can't afford to lose that money, too."

"It seems funny how that boy came to get on to you."

"It does that. I don't understand it."

"Well, what are you going to do now? The box is probably in that cottage. How are you going to recover it?"

"We must wait for an hour or two and then force an entrance."

"That will be burglary," said Bender.

"What of it? I must get possession of that box at all hazards."

"How about the boy? He'll spoil the bond scheme in any case."

"Maybe not, if I work quickly. I can perhaps succeed in hypothecating a large part of the bonds before the news leaks out."

"It would be better if we could think of some scheme to entice him from the house before morning. In order to prevent the failure of the bond matter, you must keep him from telling what he knows about it."

Bender's suggestion struck his companion as being a good one, and they put their heads together to think out a plan to accomplish their purpose. While they are thus engaged, we will explain how Vic got away from the mill during the absence of the chief schemer and how it happened that the box vanished with him. The crack that the boy got on his head from the butt of the bearded man's revolver, was a heavy one, and it sent his brains wool-gathering for a while. He was not unconscious as long as his enemy imagined, for when the masked man began binding his arms and legs he was coming to.

While the rascal was putting the box under the barrel, Vic had revived sufficiently to see, in a dreamy kind of way, what the man was doing. Then he saw the villain blow out the light, and heard his heavy steps as he ascended the stairs

to go to Kingsbridge after Bender. Five minutes later Vic was once more in full possession of his senses. It was then he realized that he was bound hand and foot. The rope, however, was too large to thoroughly accomplish the purpose it had been put to, and in a few minutes the boy was able to wriggle out of his bonds. Then he stood up and began to consider the situation.

He struck a match, lit the lamp and then started to examine the barrels. He remembered they had all stood mouth upward. Now one of them was reversed. Lifting that barrel up the brass-bound box stood revealed.

He tied the rope around the box once more and dragged it to the foot of the steps. Then the thought occurred to him to replace the barrel in the same position in which it had been left by the masked man. After doing that he, with much labor, hauled the box up step by step until he reached the passage above. He then went back for the lamp. As he placed it on the floor its light revealed Johnny's cart drawn up against the wall.

So Vic loaded the box on the cart and started for Kingsbridge. He had only a third of a mile to go to reach the Tarbox cottage, and it didn't take him long to cover that distance. He found the widow and her son waiting for him to return, and great was their astonishment when they found that he had not only brought back the cart, but the box itself as well.

"However did you do it?" asked Mrs. Tarbox, while Johnny gazed at the box and wagon with distended eyes.

Vic told his story briefly.

"What's in it?" asked Johnny, curiously. "Money?"

"Yes. There's a considerable sum of money in the box, but there's something more valuable to that masked man than money."

"What can be more valuable than money?" Johnny wanted to know.

"There are \$150,000 worth of bonds that can be turned into money by a person who knows how to do it."

"You don't say," gasped the Tarbox boy.

"I really don't think it is safe to keep this box in the house," went on Vic. "It is possible those chaps may be able to track me here. In that case the masked man is desperate enough to break in and try to recover the box, with the assistance of his partner. He's got a revolver, you know, and I wouldn't like to run against it."

"You might put the box in the cellar and cover it up," said Mrs. Tarbox.

"There's an old dry well at the end of your lot. It is almost entirely filled up with earth and rock. I thought I'd hide it there until the morning, when Johnny and I could haul it out again and wheel it over to the company's offices."

"Dat would be a fine place," said Johnny, enthusiastically. "No one ever goes down dere."

"Get the lantern," said Vic, "and we'll take it to the old well."

Johnny got the lantern and lighted it, then Vic opened the kitchen door and they both got hold of the wagon tongue and drew the cart into the yard. Across the yard they went, and thence through a gate that led into the rear of the lot which was used as a pasture for the widow's cow. The dry well was at the extreme end of this, and toward it the two boys walked, drag-



ging the cart, quite unconscious that they were watched and followed in the gloom by the very men they were trying to circumvent.

CHAPTER VI.—Dame Fortune Sides Against Vic.

The bearded man and his companion were leaning over the corner of the front fence of Mrs. Tarbox's little property, figuring on how they could manage to entice Victor Bell from the cottage, when Bender's sharp eyes detected the flash of light on the flagging of the yard facing the kitchen when Vic opened the door so that he and Johnny could drag the cart outside on the way to the dried-up well.

"Look!" whispered Bender, "there's something going on over there."

The bearded man recognized the two boys and the cart before the widow closed the door behind them.

"They're up to something, those boys," he said. "We must follow them."

They jumped the fence into the adjoining lot and hurried forward till they got in line with the shadowy forms of the boys, and then they kept pace with them.

"I wonder if they've got the box in the cart?" said the chief rascal. "They seem to be dragging a load between them."

"What can they be doing with it out here?" Bender. "One would think they'd keep it in the house."

"Well, they're dragging something in that cart, that's certain. And it is a weighty load, too. Maybe they intend to hide the box out here somewhere."

"Seems kind of foolish for them to do that," replied Bender.

The two men crept cautiously toward Vic and Johnny. Vic flashed the lantern down the dry well and saw that it was about seven feet deep.

"Now, Johnny," he said, "we'll lower the box into this hole, cover it with those old boards and then return to the house."

Then it was that the two men sprang over the fence and rushed upon them. The arch-rascal had resumed his mask again, and it was he that shoved his revolver into Vic's face and ordered him to give in, while Bender attended to the frightened Johnny Tarbox. Then the rascal jumped upon Vic, turned the dazed boy over and bound his wrists together with his handkerchief. Bender tied Johnny in a similar way, dropped him into the dry well and placed the boards over the top to drown his cries. Taking the loose end of the rope that was attached to the box, Bender tied it around Vic's body so that he couldn't get away.

"Now, young man," said the masked man, sternly, "if you utter a sound to attract any notice I'll knock the whole top of your head in with the butt of my revolver. I don't intend that you shall escape me this time."

Then he told Bender to take a section of the fence down so they could drag the cart through. As soon as this was accomplished, they started to move on, and Vic was obliged to accompany them.

In ten minutes they reached the creek road

and followed it toward the mill. It was now after midnight, and the late moon had risen in the sky. Its light illuminated the banks of the creek, and brought out many objects that before had been invisible. Among others, a good-sized rowboat that was tied to a stake in the bank. The sight of the boat suggested something to Bender, and he took his companion aside and held a consultation with him in tones too low to reach Vic's ears. The masked man agreed with whatever proposal it was that he advanced. Bender then stepped down to the edge of the creek, and, laying hold of the boat's painter, drew her close in. Vic judged that they intended to embark in the little craft.

"Get in!" commanded the masked man to the boy, and Vic, seeing no way of avoiding the issue, got in the boat.

The two men followed him, with the box, and shoved off into the creek. They seized the two pairs of oars that lay in the bottom of the boat and began rowing up toward the Hudson River. They took things easy, and the boat went along slowly. In three-quarters of an hour they reached and passed under the railroad bridge which spanned the mouth of the creek, and soon came out on the broad Hudson. They headed downstream, and, as the tide was on the ebb, the boat made very fair progress. Vic wondered where they were aiming for. He could gather no information from their conversation, which was carried on in a desultory sort of way, and in low tones. They might have covered a mile in this way, keeping within the shadows of the shore, when a small sailboat at anchor loomed up ahead. They were quite close to her before either of the men noticed her presence, though Vic had had his eye on her for some time.

Bender stopped rowing and said something to his companion. The bearded man nodded, whereupon Bender headed for the sailboat. Rowing alongside of her, the engraver stepped on board. He saw that the slide which covered the entrance to the little cabin was padlocked. It was clear to Vic that his captor intended to take possession of the catboat.

They did so by lifting the box into the cockpit and ordering Vic to follow. After securing the rowboat astern, Bender took the stops off the sail and hoisted it. When the anchor had been secured on deck, Bender, who appeared to be perfectly familiar with the management of a sailboat, took the tiller and steered for the center of the river.

CHAPTER VII.—The Key of the Brass-Bound Box.

There was a very fair breeze on the river, and the cat-boat glided along as if on greased ways. After a little while the masked man spied a short boat-hook under the seat. He picked it up and smashed the padlock which secured the cabin door. Opening the slide, he went inside and looked around. He lighted a lantern that hung from a hook in the forward end. There were two bunks in the cabin—one on either side. The lockers contained various odds and ends, and among other things a bottle of whisky, some glasses, and a box of crackers.

The bearded man brought the bottle and two



of the glasses out into the cock-pit, filled out a good drink for himself and his accomplice, and the two drank to the success of their enterprise. Then the chief rascal removed the rope from the box, and, ordering Vic to hold the tiller steady, he and his associate carried the box into the cabin.

"Now, young man," he said to the boy, when they returned, "get into the cabin and stay there. If you want to turn in on one of the bunks, you are at liberty to do so."

"Aren't you going to take that rope off me?" asked Vic.

Without a word, the masked man relieved him of the rope.

"If you'll promise to be reasonable, and not make any fuss, I'll untie your wrists," he replied.

"What can I do against you two and a revolver?" was Vic's answer.

"Not much," retorted the man, with a short laugh.

Then he released the boy, pushed him into the cabin, and closed the slide upon him.

"This is pretty fierce," muttered Vic, as he sat down on the edge of one of the bunks and began to consider the situation. "Just to think, after getting hold of this box for the second time, those rascals should be hovering around at the very moment Johnny and I started out to conceal it in the dry well. It's a regular diamond-cut-diamond game between us. At the present moment the other side is on top. These rascals are heading down the river for the lower part of the island. I suppose their plan is to keep me aboard of this sailboat. Well, we'll see if they can do it."

Vic, now that he had nothing to do, began to feel a bit tired from the exertions he had undergone in connection with the brass-bound box. He stretched himself out on the bunk, to ease his limbs and to figure out some plan by which he might overreach his captors. Before he had accomplished much in the latter line, sleep overcame him, and he was soon lost in deep slumber. He was in this condition when the bearded man entered the cabin half an hour later.

The bearded man opened the box and took out some letter heads. Under the lantern there was a shelf which worked on hinges. The rascal raised it and secured it in a position to use as a writing table. Then, with a fountain-pen which he took from his vest pocket, he wrote a letter addressed to the president of the Seaboard National Bank, which authorized the bearer, Mark Manning, to receive from the bank an advance payment of \$100,000 in cash on delivery of \$150,000 worth of treasury stock, Series A, of the Duplex Manufacturing Company, said stock to be marketed at par by the bank, and the balance due the company, less commission, interest on the \$100,000, and other expenses connected with the transaction, to be held on deposit by the bank, subject to the company's order.

The bearded man then forged the signature of Harley Sherwood, president of the Duplex Manufacturing Company, at the bottom of the writing. He then folded the letter, placed it in one of the company's envelopes, sealed and addressed it to the bank.

"That will do the business all right," he said, with a look of satisfaction, dropping the envelope

into the box, on top of the package of bonds, closing the lid down, and locking it.

As he was about to remove the brass key from the lock, he heard his companion outside give a loud shout, and he became aware that the sailboat was bobbing up and down on a heavy surge. Springing to his feet, he fell over on the bunk where Vic lay asleep, and the impact of his body awoke the boy. Recovering himself, the masked man rushed into the cockpit, to find out what was the cause of the trouble. He discovered that the sailboat had got caught between a Fort Lee ferryboat, which had just left her slip at one Hundred and Thirtieth street, Manhattan, and a string of canal boat coming down the river, close inshore.

The wobbling of the sailboat dumped Vic out on the floor, his face coming within a narrow margin of striking the brass-bound box. As he sat up, wondering what had happened, his eye lighted on the key that still remained in the lock. Glancing out into the cock-pit, he saw that both his captors were looking toward the ferryboat. So the boy snatched out the key, hid it under the inner corner of the bunk's mattress, then laid down and awaited possible developments. In a little while the bearded man, resuming his mask, re-entered the cabin and went to the box for the key. Not seeing any trace of it, he regarded the motionless boy with some suspicion. He watched Vic for several minutes, and then seemed satisfied that his prisoner was still asleep.

"Where could that key have gone?" he muttered, with an impatient oath. "I thought I left it in the lock, but it must have been in my fingers when the boat commenced to jump up and down, and it flew somewhere."

Vic heard him swear a good bit as he fumbled around with the lantern. Finally he gave the matter up, for the present at least, and went out into the cock-pit to talk to his associate in villainy.

## CHAPTER VIII.—Forewarned Is Forearmed.

Vic chuckled to himself over the masked rascal's disappointment.

"He'll make another and more thorough search presently, when he finds me awake, so I'll just hide that key in my shoe."

The boy glanced out into the cock-pit, and, seeing that the two men were conversing together, he cautiously removed the brass key from the spot where he had hidden it and shoved it into his shoe, where, as it was small and flat, like a Yale lock key, it did not inconvenience him very much. Then he turned over and went to sleep again. It was broad daylight when he woke up, much refreshed. The bearded man was asleep on the opposite bunk, with his mask still over the upper half of his face. Vic was curious about that mask which, as far as his experience went, the rascal wore continuously.

"I wonder when he takes that thing off?" the boy asked himself. "He certainly can't go about in the daylight, where people can see him with that mask on. I'd like to get a good, square look at his face, to see if I have ever seen him before. At times his voice seems familiar to me, but that may be my imagination, or because it resembles the voice of some one I know."



Vic got up and stuck his head out of the cabin entrance. The sailboat was lying at anchor in the neighborhood of Pier 1, North River. Adam Bender was reclining in the cock-pit, smoking a cigar. He saw the boy at once.

"Go back!" he said, curtly, motioning him back, at the same time significantly tapping the butt of his employer's revolver, which reposed in his pocket.

Vic didn't fear that the man had any intention of using the weapon in daylight and in that neighborhood, where any such demonstration would have been sure to attract attention. It flashed through his mind that, by a bold effort, he would be able to make his escape; but if he succeeded in doing so he would probably lose sight of the rascals and the box, maybe for good, and that did not fit in with his plans, which were to recover the box and, if possible, have the two men arrested.

So he drew in his head and returned to his bunk. He wanted to impress the man with the idea that he was more or less cowed, and thus fool them into the belief that he was not dangerous. In a little while the bearded man awoke and got up.

"So you're awake, young man, are you?" he remarked. "Well, it's daylight now, and I'll have to restrict your movements, otherwise you might give us a good deal of trouble. If all goes well, I shall let you go this afternoon, so don't grow impatient for a few hours' confinement."

He called Bender inside, and between them they bound Vic's hands behind his back and tied a handkerchief over his eyes and mouth. Then, after the bearded man had made a close search of the bunk, for the missing key—not finding it, of course—Vic was pushed down on it, and the curtains let down in front, entirely concealing his presence there. The boss rascal then removed his mask and put it in his pocket. Then he and Bender went all over the cabin, in an effort to find the lost key. The bearded man indulged in a good deal of profanity when they finally gave up the job in disgust.

"I can't see where it could have got to," he said, moodily.

"You might have dropped it out in the cockpit," suggested Bender.

"I don't think so, but there is no harm in looking."

The two men left the cabin, and drew the slide after them. Their search outside for the key was equally vain.

"I suppose I'll have to get a locksmith to open it," said the bearded man, at length, testily. "I want to take those bonds up to Wall Street at eleven o'clock."

"You can't bring a locksmith aboard with that boy in the cabin."

"I'll fix him. You'd better go ashore and get your breakfast at a restaurant. Take that small tin pail with you and bring off some coffee and a couple of sandwiches for his breakfast. First go to a drug store and get a small vial of tincture of opium and some cotton—to relieve a toothache, understand? I'll dose his coffee with the laudanum. That will send him into a deep sleep for the rest of the day. By the time he awakes, the both of us ought to be out of the reach of danger."

"That's a good idea. I was wondering how you

expected to keep him quiet, unless you meant to keep him bound and gagged as he is now."

Vic had heard every word they said, for he had crawled out of the bunk as soon as he heard the slide close to.

"So that rascal is going to get a locksmith to open the box, and, before he does that, he is going to drug me. Perhaps he will, but I rather fancy, now that I am on to his little game, that he won't. I wish I could get my arms free—I would try to work a little surprise on those villains."

Vic heard Bender draw the rowboat alongside, get into her and shove off.

"He'll be gone probably three-quarters of an hour," thought the boy. "What can I do in that time?"

He determined to employ the time in trying to free his hands, if he was not interfered with. He soon found that they had bound him too securely to admit of that.

"I'll have to give it up," he said, in a discouraged tone. "They've got me dead to rights this time. I must fall back on strategy—that is, I must spill that drugged coffee somehow while pretending to drink it, and then simulate unconsciousness. If the game works, I may be able to do something; if it fails, I can't be any worse off than I am now."

He crawled into the bunk again, and was only just in time to avoid being discovered by the bearded man, who opened the slide and entered the cabin. Vic heard him moving about the place a little while, and then he went into the cockpit again, leaving the slide open. Something over half an hour elapsed, and then Bender returned. He brought the tin-pail half full of coffee, a couple of meat sandwiches and the vial of laudanum. The bearded man took the things from him and entered the cabin alone. He removed the cover of the can, tasted the coffee and, seeing that it was properly sweetened, he emptied half of the contents of the vial into it, stirring it well with a spoon he found in the locker underneath the bunk. Then he pushed back the curtain, after resuming his mask, took the handkerchief from Vic's eyes and untied his hands.

"There's your breakfast," he said, grimly. "You see, we're not going to starve you. Eat it up, and if you continue to behave yourself you'll get some dinner later on."

He handed the boy the sandwiches and the tin-pail of coffee. Then he sat down on the opposite bunk, apparently intending to watch Vic fall into the trap.

## CHAPTER IX.—Vic on Top Once More, and What He Finds on the River.

Vic began to eat one of the sandwiches, while he held the tin of coffee in his other hand. He stole a glance across at the bearded man, who sat a few feet away, and the man's presence and evident watchfulness disconcerted him. Under present conditions it wasn't possible to fool him, and the boy began to feel desperate. He determined not to drink the coffee under any circumstances. He was about concluded to let it slip, as if by accident, out of his fingers, and thus go to waste on the floor, when a piece of good luck befriended him. Bender suddenly call-



ed his employer out into the cockpit, and Vic took instant advantage of his temporary absence to empty the entire contents of the tin can under the mattress of the opposite bunk.

He was finishing his second sandwich when the bearded man returned and noted, with satisfaction, the boy drain apparently the last of the drugged coffee. Vic put down the empty can and wiped his lips with the back of his hand.

"That was good coffee," he remarked, with a forced grin.

"I'm glad you liked it," replied the man, dryly. "Turn in on that bunk," he added, "and lie quiet, and I won't tie your hands."

Vic, with a thrill of hope, obeyed with apparent meekness, and his captor drew the red curtains in front of him.

He heard the chief rascal talking to his companion through the cabin opening, and he listened with all his ears. They were speaking in too low a tone for him to make out what they said. At length he heard the bearded man say:

"He ought to be off by this time. I'll take a look at him."

The boy was now face to face with the ticklish operation of simulating a heavy slumber, and he succeeded in performing his part well-enough to deceive the rascal. The man, feeling quite sure that Vic was helpless for several hours, removed his mask and announced to his companion his intention of going ashore for his own breakfast.

"I'll return in about an hour," he said, "and will bring a locksmith with me."

"All right," answered Bender.

The bearded man then left the catboat in the rowboat, after shutting the slide of the cabin, leaving Vic entirely to himself.

"Now for action!" cried the boy, resolutely, sitting up on the bunk. "I've got about an hour to do something, and I guess I shan't need half of that time."

He slipped over to the slide and pulled it open a trifle. Bender was in the act of lighting a fresh cigar, and seemed to be taking matters pretty easy in the morning sunshine.

While waiting for the moment to act aggressively, Vic took the key from his shoe and unlocked the brass-bound box. He wanted to make sure that the money, as well as the bonds, was still in the box. He found that it was, and then decided to remove it, stowing the bills away in the inner pockets of his jacket, lest anything should happen to go wrong with his plan of operations.

Then he started to get busy. His first idea was to fling back the slide suddenly, rush out and overpower Bender in the cockpit. He did not question his ability to do this successfully, but he was afraid the act would attract notice, and his scheme was to avoid such a thing, if possible.

"Strategy is always a winner," he said to himself, thinking how artfully he had fooled the head rascal into the belief that he had swallowed the drugged coffee and was, for a while, dead to the world. "If I can only get him to enter the cabin I'll have him dead to rights. Now, how can I manage it?"

He peered out at the man as he lay sprawled off in the sunshine smoking his cigar. Bender hadn't had any sleep the preceding night, and he

looked heavy about the eyes. This fact attracted Vic's notice.

"That chap looks half-asleep," said Vic to himself. "I'm going to attract his attention and see how it works."

He grabbed a blanket from the bunk, picked up the tin can and threw it against the roof of the cabin, and then crouched down in a corner near the sliding door. The can made a great racket when it fell back on the floor and rolled about. The ruse produced the desired effect. Bender jumped up, opened the slide and looked in to see what had made the noise. This was what Vic was waiting for. He rose up suddenly, enveloped the man's head in the blanket and yanked him bodily into the cabin. Then he sat down him and proceeded to stifle him into insensibility with the folds of the blanket. Bender struggled as well as he could under the disadvantageous circumstances in which he was placed, but the advantage was all with the boy, who could not be dislodged. The result was that the engraver soon succumbed and lay quite still. Vic lifted the ends of the blanket slowly and cautiously. The man was unconscious.

"I'll treat you to a dose of the same medicine you helped to deal out to me," said Vic, proceeding to bind Bender's arms securely behind his back, and then to gag him with a handkerchief. "Now, you can take a good rest in that bunk. You look as though you needed it," he grinned, picking the man up and placing him in the bunk he himself had only lately vacated. "Now, I'll get the boat under way for Supyten Duyvil Creek and Kingsbridge."

What Vic didn't know about sailing a catboat, or even a small yacht, wasn't worth mentioning. It was one of his hobbies, and constant practice on the Harlem River, and sometimes on the Hudson, had made him an expert. Having disposed of Bender to his satisfaction, Vic left the cabin and, throwing off his jacket, hauled up the boat's mainsail. The anchor was light and he soon had it on board, and the boat headed up the Hudson under a smacking breeze which promised to bring her to her destination in a few hours. At that hour in the morning the lower reach of the Hudson was covered with all sorts of craft—ferryboats, tugboats, lighters, sloops, schooners, and goodness knows what not in the way of boats—so that it required considerable skill for the boy to work his way through this maze of marine architecture. He was equal to the ordeal, however, and gradually left the worst of it behind him. When opposite Forty-second street, well out in the center of the river, he observed a piece of wood floating toward him. As he steered, so as to avoid contact with it, he saw a brilliant sparkle of light flashing from the center of it.

"I wonder what that can be?" he asked himself.

He guided the boat close to the bit of log and threw her up into the wind, stopping her progress. The log floated alongside. Vic reached over and picked up a lady's pocketbook, to which was attached a handsome diamond ring with a large stone.

"Gee whiz!" he exclaimed. "This is a find for fair."

He put the catboat on her course again, and then proceeded to examine the ring and pocket-



book. The former seemed to be of considerable value, though Vic had not the slightest idea what it was really worth. The pocketbook contained a hundred-dollar bill and some smaller notes, amounting, in all, to \$124. There were also a number of newspaper clippings, an eye-glass with gold settings and a variety of odds and ends, but not the slightest clue to the name or identity of the owner, other than a pair of initials on the flap—J. B.

"Funny how this purse and ring came to be floating down the river on an old log. It's a wonder it wasn't dumped overboard. Seems as if it was intended that I should find it. The owner shall have them back if I ever can locate her, otherwise I suppose they become my property."

Shortly after noon Vic passed under the railroad bridge at Spuyten Duyvil, and headed up the creek in the direction of Kingsbridge.

## CHAPTER X.—Vic Astonishes the President of the Duplex Manufacturing Company.

It was about one o'clock when Vic hauled up alongside one of the landings in the neighborhood of Kingsbridge. He saw several young lads playing near the creek, one of whom he knew, and he sent him over to Widow Tarbox's cottage, to inform her that he had got back, and to ask Johnny, if he was around, to bring his cart down to the landing. In fifteen minutes Johnny came prancing down to the creek with his cart.

"Hello, Vic!" he shouted. "Where did dose men take you off to?"

"I'll tell you all about it later on. I've got one of them in this catboat now, and I want you to run to the police station and fetch a cop back with you to take charge of him."

"I'll do dat, Vic. Where did you get dat boat?"

"Don't ask questions, Johnny, but run along. I'm waiting."

The Tarbox youngster started off at once. In a short time he returned with an officer. Vic told the policeman the character of the man he had in the cabin.

"You must come to the station and make a charge against him," said the officer.

"You take him along, and the Duplex Manufacturing Company will make the charge."

The policeman said that the sergeant wouldn't hold the man unless a definite charge was made when he was brought to the station.

"All right, officer. I'll go with you. I've got the evidence of his crime in a brass-bound box aboard the boat. I want you to give me a lift with it."

The policeman consented to help Vic carry the box ashore and place it in Johnny's cart. Then he went back and got his prisoner, who was now fully conscious. The procession took up its line of march for the station, accompanied by a number of idle and curious people, in addition to all the boys in the vicinity.

At the station Vic charged the prisoner with the crime of forgery—that is, the reproduction of facsimile plates, and printing from same a certain number of duplicate copies of the first mortgage bonds, Series A, of the Duplex Manu-

facturing Company, with intent to defraud both the company and the public.

"This man," said Vic, "is not the chief offender in this crime, but he is just as guilty as his principal, who is still at large. The genuine bonds of the Duplex Company are in that box, which I turn over to your charge, sergeant. So, also, are the spurious plates. The forged bonds are in the company's safe."

The prisoner had no statement to make, so his pedigree was taken, and he was locked up in a cell. Vic sent Johnny home and started for the plant of the Duplex Company, where he was employed as shipping clerk. He went direct to the offices, and asked if he could see President Harley Sherwood. Being asked to mention the nature of his business with the head of the company, he stated that it was a matter of the utmost importance.

After some delay he was admitted to the president's office. That gentleman looked very much worried. He was, at that moment, investigating the disappearance of the envelope containing the \$50,000 which he had placed in the office safe the previous afternoon, and he was not pleased to be disturbed, especially by one of the minor employees of the company.

"What do you wish to see me about, young man?" he asked, a bit sharply.

"Two matters of great importance, sir," replied Vic, eagerly.

"Name them, and make your communication as brief as possible."

"Yes, sir," said the boy, respectfully. "I wish to know, in the first place, if you have missed a large sum of money from your safe."

President Sherwood sat back in his chair and stared at the boy in considerable surprise.

"Why do you ask that question?" he inquired, with a keen glance at Vic.

"Because I have good reason to believe that the sum of \$50,000 was taken from the office safe late yesterday afternoon, or, maybe, early in the evening, sir."

"What has led you to form that belief?"

"A conversation that I overheard in the cellar of the old mill on the creek road last evening between two men, one of whom now is in the Kingsbridge police station on a very serious charge I have brought against him."

"Indeed," replied Mr. Sherwood, knitting his brows. "May I ask you what you were doing in that deserted building last night?"

"I took refuge there with a young friend of mine named Johnny Tarbox, from the thunderstorm."

"I see. How came you to overhear the conversation which, I should imagine, was not intended for your ears?" asked Mr. Sherwood, with some interest.

"I think you will understand the matter better if I begin at the beginning and tell you all I have been through and discovered. I think you will find that it affects this company to a very serious extent."

"It certainly affects us to the extent of \$50,000," answered the president.

"It concerns the company much more than that, sir," said Vic, with such a serious expression that Mr. Sherwood became deeply interested.



"I am ready to hear your story, young man," he said.

"As for the \$50,000," continued Vic, "I can relieve your mind as to most of it. I have recovered \$47,000 of the amount, and you ought to find the balance in the possession of the prisoner, whose name is Bender, at the station-house, for I saw him receive \$3,000 from the man who admitted that he had taken the money from the safe."

Thus speaking, to Mr. Sherwood's great amazement, Vic placed upon the president's desk the notes he had taken from the brass-bound box.

"How did you recover this money?" asked Mr. Sherwood.

"It will all come out in my story, sir," replied Vic.

"Very well. Proceed."

Whereupon Vic told the complete story of his adventures during the last twelve hours, commencing from the moment he and Johnny Tarbox took refuge in the old mill from the thunderstorm until he returned to Kingsbridge a short time ago and handed his prisoner over to the police.

The robbery of the safe of the \$50,000, however, paled into insignificance beside the bond forgery, of which President Sherwood had not the slightest suspicion, and Vic's statement of which thoroughly staggered him. He sent at once for the package of treasury first mortgage bonds that were in the vault—the ones that the bearded man had told his accomplice, in Vic's hearing, he had substituted for the genuine bonds—and a close examination of these securities bore out the truth of the boy's story, for there was every evidence, under a microscope, that they were forgeries. This discovery greatly agitated Harley Sherwood, and he used some very strong language on the subject.

"Victor Bell," he said, turning to the boy, "you have rendered the company an extremely valuable service, and I can assure you that your zeal in our interest shall be rewarded as it deserves. I shall want you to write down the most accurate description of the bearded and masked man you are able to do, and I will send it to the headquarters of the Manhattan police. I have no doubt that they will be able to run the man down."

Vic was permitted to go off for the rest of the day. He went home at once to get something to eat, for he felt uncommonly hungry, having had nothing to eat that day but the two sandwiches furnished to him by his captors that morning. A special meeting of the board of directors of the Duplex Manufacturing Company was called for that evening, and the forgery of the treasury bonds was laid before them. Vic had been notified to be in attendance, together with Mrs. Tarbox and her son Johnny. The board was astounded by the revelation. Vic was called into the room, and told his story in a clear and concise way. His statement did not vary in the least from the narrative he laid before the president that afternoon. Mrs. Tarbox and Johnny were called upon to corroborate such parts of Vic's story as they figured in, and they did so without hesitation, though somewhat awed in the presence of the gentlemen who composed the board.

"Madam," said Harley Sherwood, "we shall

expect you to appear at the examination to-morrow morning, of the prisoner, Bender. I presume you will have no hesitation in repeating your story under oath."

"No, sir," replied Mrs. Tarbox. "Why should I?"

"Thank you, madam. We are very much obliged to you for coming before us this evening to substantiate Victor Bell's story. You and your son may go now, as we have heard all that is necessary."

Vic went home with them, and the board then summoned before them the cashier and bookkeepers of the establishment. They were subjected to a rigid examination, but not the least thing could be found against them. The only other person who had access to the safe and vaults, including, of course, the president, was Ralph Roundtree, the vice-president, and he was out of town with his family on his annual vacation. As neither he nor the president were suspected of having any hand in forging the company's bonds, the whole matter seemed to be involved in the deepest mystery.

It was unanimously decided to authorize Mr. Sherwood to employ a shrewd detective to undertake the unravelment of the tangle. The board then adjourned, to meet at the president's pleasure.

## CHAPTER XI.—Vic's Reward.

President Sherwood telegraphed that night for a Pinkerton detective, and one of the best men attached to the New York agency responded next morning to the call. Victor Bell, who had resumed his duties in the shipping department, was called to the president's office, and repeated his story to the detective.

"You could identify this rascal if you saw him again, I suppose?" said the detective.

"Not if I saw him without his mask. I have since thought that his beard might also have been a false one."

"Well, I can help you some in case I make an arrest. What kind of a beard did the man wear?"

"A dark-brown one—about so long," and the boy indicated the length.

"I will procure such a beard and a black mask, in order to decorate any person we may have reason to suspect in this matter," said the detective. "It may help you to identify the right man. Describe this individual as fully as it is possible for you to do under the circumstances."

Vic did so, and the detective made some notes in his book. On leaving the president's office Vic met the manager.

"May I ask your advice on a little matter that has happened to me?" asked the boy.

"Certainly, Vic," replied Manager Brown, pleasantly.

He had taken a great fancy to the lad, and it was he who had told Vic that he was sure some day he would make his mark in life. The boy drew from his pocket the ring and pocket-book he had found floating down the Hudson on the log. He handed both to Mr. Brown to look at, at the same time detailing the circumstances under which they had come into his possession.

"I suppose I ought to try to find the owner,



don't you think so, sir?" said Vic. "The ring seems to be a valuable one, and there is \$124 in money in the pocketbook."

"Well it is only right you should make some effort to discover the person to whom they belong," replied the manager. "I am not an expert judge of diamonds, but, comparing it with one my wife owns, I should think this ring was worth every cent of \$500 or \$600."

"That's a lot of money, sir, to put into a ring."

"That's nothing. There are rings whose value runs into the thousands. For instance, I have a friend who wears a large ruby which cost him \$2,000. Flawless rubies are worth almost as much as diamonds similar in weight."

"Well, what shall I do? Advertise the ring and pocketbook?"

"I think you had better. It wants to be carefully done, so as not to give a hint that an unscrupulous person could avail himself of to make a claim to the property. If you will leave the matter with me I will attend to it."

"I shall be much obliged to you if you will, sir."

"In the meantime I will wrap the articles up in a package, and place it in the office safe."

"Thank you, sir."

That settled the matter for the present, and Vic returned to the shipping-room and resumed his work, which was somewhat behind, owing to his having been away the day before. He hadn't more than got things in shape again before the detective made his appearance and said he would have to accompany him to the police court and give such evidence as would be required of him, to ensure that the prisoner be held for subsequent trial. At the examination before the magistrate the prisoner denied everything, but could not account for the \$3,000 found on his person when searched the day before at the police station immediately after his arrest. Nor could he offer any explanation about the kit of fine engraving tools found in the room he had engaged at the hotel.

He also refused to disclose the identity of his associate of the night before, and was silent as to why he participated in the assault on Vic, and afterward took part in that lad's abduction. After all the testimony was in, the justice decided to remand him for trial on the charge of abduction, as there was not sufficient evidence to show that he had actually engraved the plates found in the brass-bound box. So the charge of forgery was temporarily abandoned pending the efforts of the Pinkerton man to capture the principal in the case.

At a subsequent meeting of the directors of the Duplex Manufacturing Company a resolution was introduced by the president tendering Victor Bell a vote of thanks and a reward of \$5,000 for his successful efforts in saving the company from a very great financial loss. The manager was also instructed to increase his pay from \$10 to \$15 a week, and to advance him in the company's employ as fast as circumstances permitted.

"I told you that you were bound to make your mark, Vic," said Manager Brown after he had called the boy into his office, to acquaint him with his good fortune. "You seem to have succeeded in that direction much faster than I supposed you would with all your smartness. It gives me great pleasure to carry out the instructions of President Sherwood, which are, first, to

present you with this letter"—handing Vic an unsealed envelope—"which contains a vote of thanks from the directors, signed by the president and secretary of the board; second, to place in your hands this check for \$5,000, in acknowledgment of your valuable services in the company's interest; and, third, to inform you that, beginning with this week, your wages will be \$15 instead of \$10, as heretofore."

Vic had hoped to receive something from the company in the way of a present, but he had not expected to be so liberally dealt with. As he accepted the envelope and check he could hardly find words to express his thanks for the company's generosity.

"Don't say a word, Vic," said the manager, checking him. "You deserve all you have received. It isn't necessary to express any thanks."

"Still I should like the company to understand that I appreciate this evidence of its consideration."

"That's all right. I will inform Mr. Sherwood as to your feelings on the subject. Now, that you have made yourself solid with the company, which I may say, is increasing in importance every day, it is up to you to make the most of your opportunities. There is no reason that I can see why you should not, in time, rise to the very post I fill at present. When I was your age my chances were not half as bright as yours are now."

"Well, sir," replied Vic, confidently. "I certainly mean to do my best. It is my ambition not only to become manager of this plant eventually, but I hope to go a step higher and become president of the company."

"It is not impossible, Vic," replied Mr. Brown, rather amused at the lad's ambitious expectations; "but, in order to reach the presidency, you will have to save your money and buy a block of the stock. It is generally the man who holds the controlling interest, either in person or through his friends, that gets himself elected president of a corporation. If you are serious in your purpose I advise you to try and invest the amount of your check in Duplex stock, if you can find any one willing to part with his holdings, or a part thereof. You can't get in any too quick, as this is a close corporation—that is, the shares are held by probably not over a dozen men, and you would have to pay a good premium if you found a stockholder willing to let you have any shares, which, I think, is very doubtful. The chances that any of the shares of this company will ever go on the open market is exceedingly slim. The prospects of the company are too brilliant."

"Then my chances of ever becoming president are slim, too, I suppose," replied Vic, regretfully.

"Ordinarily considered, I may say, yes; but a thousand things happen every day in this world that are unlooked for. In fact, it has come to be a saying that 'it is the unexpected which always happens.' I believe in a boy aiming high. If, in the end, he be not fortunate enough to hit the bull's-eye, he is almost sure to come within close relationship to it. If you go ahead with the resolve that some day you hope to become president of this company, and, in the end, you wind up as general manager, you will at least have the satisfaction of knowing that you have accom-







fairs, Mr. Brown, and I am very grateful to you. You are certainly helping me to make my mark."

"Don't mention it, Vic. I have merely done for you what you couldn't do yourself. I am glad of the chance to help a bright boy like you proved yourself to be."

### CHAPTER XIII.—Vic Performs A Gallant Action.

The advertisement which Mr. Brown had inserted in the Herald and other papers, in the "Lost and Found" column, having reference to the pocketbook and ring Vic found floating on the Hudson River, was productive of no results, although the notice was repeated several times.

"What shall we do about them, Mr. Brown?" Vic asked, one morning. "Advertising is expensive, and it doesn't do any good, as far as I can see."

"I don't know that we can do any better than to keep on advertising. There is money enough in the pocketbook to repay you for considerable outlay in that direction," replied the manager.

"All right," answered the boy. "I'm willing to be guided by whatever you say, sir."

The next day was Saturday, and the last half-holiday of the season for the employees of the Duplex Manufacturing Company. Vic went down to the Yacht and Boat Club, on the Harlem River, peeled off his clothes and arrayed himself in the light and airy costume adopted by the members when they went out for an afternoon spin in a shell. Then he and another member grabbed one of the light boats, carried it out of the building and deposited it in the water. There is a knack, of course, in getting into a shell in a graceful and apparently careless manner.

Vic and his companion were adepts at this, acquired by long practise. They started off up the river at a swinging pace that sent the shell spinning along like a gull skimming the water. It was a lovely afternoon, and the two boys were overflowing with health and spirits. They had gone a mile when they saw a good-sized launch approaching at a swift rate. Between them and the launch was a small rowboat, pulled by a coatless gentleman. He had two passengers—a middle-aged lady, who sat facing him, and a young girl who sat in the stern sheets, steering the boat. The gentleman's back was toward the approaching launch.

Vic and his companion had stopped for a breathing spell, and both turned to look in the direction their shell was gliding now at reduced speed. At that moment, when the launch was close upon the rowboat, the young girl at the helm became confused and pulled the wrong rope. The gentleman was pulling a lusty stroke at the time, and the consequence was the boat suddenly across the course of the launch. It was impossible to stop the latter in time to avoid a collision. She struck the boat just ahead of the rower and passed on with her power cut off, the helmsman trying to bring her around in a circle.

The bow of the rowboat was cut off as by a knife, and she sank at once, leaving her passengers in the water. The woman screamed, and the young girl went down like a stone.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Vic. "That girl will be drowned. Pull like fun!"

They pulled like good fellows, and presently Vic saw the girl come to the surface close by, wave her arms wildly and sink again. In a moment he was on his feet, and, dropping his oars, he dived to her rescue. The red sash of her white dress guided him to her, and he grabbed her a yard under the water. Kicking out, he rose to the surface with his now almost unconscious burden.

The gentleman was supporting the lady and trying to keep afloat until the launch got near enough to take them aboard. Vic was like a duck in the water, and it was no difficulty for him to hold the girl out of further peril till the launch picked up the other two, and then came toward them. The girl was lifted on board the launch, which waited a moment until the boy resumed his seat in the shell, none the worse for his ducking, then it darted off down the river.

Two hours later, when Vic and his companion arrived at the club-house, an attendant asked if one of them hadn't saved a young lady from drowning up the river.

"Well, I went overboard after a young girl that was spilled out of a rowboat in a collision with a launch. What about it?"

"The party was landed here by the launch. It was Mr. Saunders, his wife, and niece, Miss Butterick. They were using one of our boats. They went home in their automobile, and Mr. Saunders left this note for the person who rescued Miss Butterick"—and the man handed Vic an envelope with the club's stamp on it.

Vic opened and read it. It was a brief note of thanks for the service rendered to the writer's niece, and a pressing invitation to the unknown rescuer to call at Saunders' home at his earliest convenience. Vic knew that Mr. Saunders was one of the directors of the Duplex Manufacturing Company, and a man of wealth and of some influence in the Kingsbridge district.

"Well," asked his companion, curiously, "what does he say?"

"Read it for yourself," replied Vic, handing him the note.

"Of course you'll call," said the other, after reading the note. "Saunders is a big bug in this locality. It's well worth while making a friend of him."

"I'll think about it," answered Vic, who was thinking about the lovely miss he had been so fortunate as to save from a possible watery grave.

"I wouldn't leave it later than to-morrow. That was a pretty girl you saved, and 'most any fellow would be just crazy to improve the opportunity to make himself solid with her."

Vic did not make any reply to that speech. In his heart he was anxious to make Miss Butterick's acquaintance, but he did not want his companion to guess his feelings on the subject. So he changed the topic, and soon afterward they left the club-house for their homes.

On the following afternoon Vic dressed himself with extra care, and set out for the Saunders home. It was a fine mansion, surrounded by spacious, velvety lawns, about a mile from the Tarbox cottage. When he reached the front gate, where a graveled walk led up to the broad piazza, Vic's courage failed him and he kept on down the road at express speed, as though hurrying for a



doctor. After walking two blocks he came to a pause.

"What a chump I'm making of myself," he muttered. "What am I afraid of?"

So he turned about and went back. When he came to the gate again, and noticed the flutter of a white dress on the paizza, he got another attack of stage fright, and sailed on two blocks the other way before he realized what he was doing. Then he metaphorically kicked himself, turned around and retraced his steps. For the third time he charged down on the gate, and would probably have continued on again but that he saw Mr. Sherwood, president of the Duplex Manufacturing Company, coming up the road toward him.

"Good-afternoon, Bell," he said, laying his hand on the Saunders gate, as though he were about to enter the grounds, "are you out for a stroll?"

"Well, sir, I was just about to call on Mr. Saunders," replied Vic, desperately.

"Indeed! I was not aware you were acquainted with him."

"I'm not, sir; but the fact of the matter is he, his wife, and niece were out on the Harlem River yesterday afternoon and met with an accident. I was fortunate enough to render them a service, and Mr. Saunders left a note at the rowing club for me to call on him. If you are going to call on them, perhaps you will not mind introducing me. I'm almost afraid to venture in alone, sir."

"Oh, I see how it is," laughed Mr. Sherwood. "Come right along with me, and I will see you through."

He linked his arm in Vic's, and together they passed through the gate. Two minutes later the boy was being introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Saunders and Miss Jennie Butterick.

#### CHAPTER XIV.—Miss Jennie Butterick.

Jennie Butterick was a pretty girl. Vic had discovered that fact at their first meeting, while holding her up in the water, in a partly unconscious state, waiting for the launch to bear down on them and take her on board. At that time, being drenched and limp, she naturally was not looking her best. Now, however, arrayed in her best, and appearing serene and comfortable, she presented an altogether different picture. Her age was fifteen, and she looked as bright as a dollar fresh from the mint. Whatever may have been Miss Butterick's shortcomings, bashfulness was not one of them. Vic hadn't exchanged a dozen words with her before he realized that the advantage was all on her side. Mr. and Mrs. Saunders, after expressing their gratitude to Vic for the service he had rendered their niece, and hoping that they and the lad would become better acquainted, had turned him over to the young lady. Most girls would have felt embarrassed in the presence of a good-looking boy who had saved their life, and have found some difficulty in expressing their sentiments. Not so Miss Butterick.

"I hope you understand, Mr. Bell," she said, in well-chosen words, at the same time stealing a glance at his face and mentally deciding that he was a handsome boy, "that I am very grateful to you for saving my life yesterday afternoon."

"That's all right, Miss Butterick," replied Vic, cheerfully. "I am very glad I happened to be at hand to help you out of your scrape."

"I might have been drowned but that you bravely came to my rescue," she continued, with another sly look.

"You might, that is true, for the Harlem River has no respect even for a pretty girl when she falls overboard and cannot swim."

The implied compliment in Vic's words stirred up the saucy side of the girl's nature.

"Isn't it ridiculous that I should become the heroine of such a misadventure? I have often read of similar affairs in novels, but, really, I never thought it would fall to my lot to be saved from a watery grave by a good-looking young man."

Vic was somewhat taken aback by her words, for he could not decide whether her remarks were intended as a compliment, or whether she was making fun at him. He cast a single, furtive glance at her, but without solving the problem. As he did not exactly know how to make a suitable reply, he kept silent.

"I suppose," she continued, after a brief pause, "that you have been longing, for years, for an opportunity to rescue some unfortunate young lady from a watery grave, or from a runaway horse, or some such ridiculous situation. Your patience has at last been rewarded, and I am the victim."

Vic was sure now she was making sport of him, and the idea nettled him.

"No, Miss Butterick," he replied, coolly. "I assure you, not being in the habit of reading novels, I have not given the subject any thought. If you feel that fate has treated you unkindly in giving me the chance to pull you out of an unpleasant situation, it will give me great pleasure to try and correct the mistake."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked the pretty miss, staring hard at the speaker, as if she didn't grasp the meaning of his words.

"I mean, Miss Butterick," replied Vic, with a slight grin, "that having been so unfortunate as to save you—in your own language—from a watery grave, I am ready to repair my blunder."

"Repair your blunder!" gasped the girl, in bewilderment.

"Exactly. If you will permit me the pleasure, I will take you out in a boat this very afternoon, or next Saturday if you prefer, and drop you overboard in nearly the exact spot I found you yesterday. I can't offer to do a fairer thing than that, can I?"

"Well!" exclaimed the girl, almost paralyzed at his cool proposal, though she understood that he was merely getting back at her for her sauciness, "you are certainly the most remarkable young man I ever have met!"

"Am I to take that as a compliment?" he grinned. Or——"

"As a compliment, by all means," she replied. "So you are sorry, after all, that you rescued me from——"

"A watery grave," he interrupted. "Oh, no; it was you who seemed to regret the fact that fate had made you a victim. As far as I am concerned, that fate had honored me in selecting me as the instrument to rescue an exceedingly pretty girl."

"Really," replied Miss Butterick, with a vivid



blush. "You said that very nice, indeed. Your language would lead me to believe that you carry a small edition of the Standard Dictionary around in your pocket for consultation as occasion requires."

"I have no doubt that a dictionary is an excellent book to have within reach at all times, Miss Butterick," replied Vic, politely; "but, all the same, I do not possess a portable edition. Probably that is where you have the advantage of me."

"I presume you think you are an uncommonly smart young man," she said, saucily. "It was you, wasn't it, who saved the Duplex Manufacturing Company from a heavy financial loss some weeks ago? Strange that I didn't recall the fact until this moment. I now wish to apologize for saying that I thought fate had treated me unkindly in making me a victim yesterday afternoon. I have decided that I ought to be truly thankful that the opportunity was mine to have been rescued from a perilous situation by the smartest young man in Kingsbridge."

"Thank you, Miss Butterick," grinned Vic, who had now lost all his reserve in the presence of the prettiest girl in the neighborhood. "You can say some very nice things yourself when you've the mind to."

"I hope you understand how highly I appreciate the honor which has been conferred on me," she replied, demurely. "I remember now that I have been just dying to make your acquaintance ever since papa spoke about your brilliant feat of saving the money and the bonds of the company, and actually capturing one of the men all by yourself. Do you know, I think you are quite a prodigy."

Vic grinned.

"Don't you think you are a prodigy?" she persisted, with a winsome glance.

"I haven't thought about the matter at all, Miss Butterick."

"Haven't you? What a modest young man you are," she retorted.

"We all have our failings," he snickered.

"Certainly, bashfulness isn't one of them," she retorted.

"I couldn't be bashful in the presence of such a witty and lovely——"

"Come, now, Mr. Bell," she protested, with a rosy blush. "I think it's time to change the subject, don't you?"

"I agree with you, Miss Butterick."

"Then I'll tell you a most remarkable incident that happened to auntie and me up the river some weeks since," she continued, vivaciously. "You see, we were spending the summer at West Point. One day auntie and I went down to the landing to meet some friends we expected by the Albany day boat. They did not come; and, after the boat went on her way, we walked some little distance down the river, and finally sat down to rest on a log close to the water's edge. I took from my finger a valuable diamond ring that belonged to my mother; and attached it to the rubber band around my pocketbook, laying the wallet beside me on the log."

At this point Vic grew uncommonly interested in her story.

"The reason I did this was because I saw what I took to be a very curious shell sticking out of the bank about a foot under the surface of the

river, and I wanted to get it without wetting the ring. I got the shell, and it was a very interesting specimen. Collecting shells is a hobby of mine. I have a cabinet full of them, and it will give me great pleasure to show them to you when we go into the house. The shell took up my attention so much that when auntie and I rose to leave the spot I forgot all about the ring and the pocketbook."

"And the log got loose and floated off down the river with your property," said Vic, in some little excitement.

"Why, yes; that is just what it did do," she answered, in surprise. "How did you guess?"

"Oh, that was easy. Go on and tell me the rest."

"We had walked up the bank beyond the railroad some little distance before I missed my ring and pocketbook. Then I remembered the circumstances of the case and rushed back to get them. To my dismay I saw the log floating off quite a distance from the shore. I was greatly distressed. There was over \$100 in money in my wallet, though I did not care so much for that as I did for my ring, which was priceless to me, because it came to me from my mother when she died." And Vic saw the girl's handsome eyes fill with tears.

"It was a great loss to you, wasn't it?" said Vic.

"I could hardly have suffered a more severe one!" she replied.

"Now, what would you give to have that ring and pocketbook come back to you in the same condition you lost them?"

"What would I give?" she exclaimed. "Everything I possess in this world!" she cried earnestly. "But they never will! Uncle has advertised a reward of \$1,000 for them, but I'm afraid they lie at the bottom of the river!" she concluded, mournfully.

"Don't be so sure of that, Miss Butterick," said Vic, with sparkling eyes. "Do you know that I am something of a magician?"

"A magician!" she ejaculated, wonderingly.

"Yes. I have the ability sometimes to recover lost property."

"You are joking, aren't you?" she said, looking him straight in the face.

"Not in this instance. Now, Miss Butterick, some day I might want you to bestow a favor on me. Will you promise to do it, or at least consider the matter favorably, if I put on my magical cap, and whistle back your ring and pocketbook?" he asked, eagerly.

"I'd promise anything to get my ring back," she cried; "but I know that is quite out of the question."

"We'll see if it is. Just imagine that I am in a trance now, please."

"In a trance! Why, you foolish boy——"

"Hush!" whispered Vic, mysteriously, as he closed his eyes and leaned back in his chair. "Answer my questions. Describe the pocketbook, please."

Miss Butterick described it, and its contents exactly.

"I see it!" exclaimed Vic, solemnly. "And the ring, too. They are not at the bottom of the river, but done up in a package that lies in the



office safe of the Duplex Manufacturing Company."

"Mr. Bell!" cried the girl, quivering with excitement. "What do you mean?"

"I mean, Miss Butterick, that your ring and pocketbook are quite safe, and shall be returned to you to-morrow. I found them myself floating down the Hudson on the identical log on which you placed them. They are, at this moment, in our office safe."

#### CHAPTER XV.—Vic's Success In the Real Estate Field.

Jennie Butterick uttered a scream of delight and clasped her hands together. Her aunt, who, in company with her husband and Mr. Sherwood, was sitting a short distance away, looked around at her, wondering what had occasioned her excitement.

"Oh, auntie, what do you think?" the girl called out to her. "Mr. Bell found my diamond ring and pocketbook floating down the Hudson on that log."

"Is it possible?" ejaculated Mrs. Saunders, rising and coming over to them.

"Yes," answered Vic. "I'll tell you how it happened."

And he explained how the incident transpired on the morning he was returning from the Battery to Kingsbridge in the catboat with his prisoner and the company's property on board.

"I never would have paid any attention to that log but for the flashing of the sun's rays from the diamond," he said. "Mr. Brown, our manager, advertised the articles several times in the Herald and World, but no one put in a claim for them."

"I can't tell you how grateful I am to you for recovering my ring especially," Miss Butterick said, earnestly. "And, on top of that, you saved my life. I certainly will never forget you as long as I live."

"Then you are willing to admit that I did not do wrong in jumping overboard after you yesterday," chuckled the boy.

"Why, of course you didn't. If you hadn't done it, I should have been drowned!"

"I am to understand, then, that you do not wish me to alter matters by taking you out in a boat and —"

"Now, aren't you just too horrid for anything!" she pouted.

"All right. We'll let it stand as it is," he laughed.

"Auntie, you must tell uncle to give Mr. Bell the reward he offered for my ring and pocketbook."

"Don't do anything of the kind, Mrs. Saunders!" cried Vic, quickly.

"Why not, Mr. Bell?" asked the girl. "Uncle is my guardian, and I can easily afford a thousand dollars for such a service, without considering the matter of my life, which is something I would not think of offering you pay for."

"I think we made a bargain about that ring and pocketbook. You promised to grant me a small favor some day if I should ask it of you. That covers the whole business."

"Well, I certainly will grant you any favor you ever ask of me," she replied, energetically.

"Don't be too rash, Miss Butterick," smiled Vic. "You might want to draw out at the critical moment."

"No, I won't. I never go back on my word."

"All right. I'll remember that."

"Come in and see my cabinet of shells," the pretty miss said, suddenly.

Vic accompanied her inside, and was much interested in her collection, which was both unique and valuable. The boy was easily induced to remain to tea, and when he left he was pressed to call again soon. Next day Jennie Butterick called at the Duplex establishment, and, at her own request, she was shown to the shipping-room, where she found Vic up to his eyes in business.

"This visit is quite an honor, Miss Butterick," said the boy, gallantly.

The girl smiled and blushed a little.

"I thought I'd look in to see what you were doing," she said.

Vic hastened to explain to her the mysteries of the shipping department, and showed her around the place. He also took her into the engine room, and one or two other sections of the establishment, and she expressed herself very much entertained by what she saw. Then Vic took her to the manager's office and introduced her to Mr. Brown.

"Mr. Brown, this is the owner of the ring and pocketbook which you deposited in the office safe. Will you kindly get them for her?"

The manager said he would, and they were soon in her hands.

"I have a little bill of advertising against you," he said. "Or rather Vic has. He put up for it."

She settled the amount, and soon afterward left. Late that afternoon a boy was shown into the shipping-room. He handed Vic a small package, asking him to sign for it. When our hero opened the packet he found an elegant gold watch and chain, and an enameled diamond-encrusted charm, together with a short note from Jennie Butterick, in which she expressed her gratitude all over again in writing, and begged him to accept the enclosed articles as a slight testimonial of her appreciation of what she owed him. Of course Vic accepted the present, and wrote the pretty miss a letter of acknowledgment and thanks.

After that Vic became a regular caller at the Saunders home, and it was understood that Jennie Butterick was the magnet which drew him there. One afternoon Mr. Ralph Roundtree, the vice-president of the company, walked into the shipping-room to look around. Vic had seen him once or twice before, though not for some weeks. He was a fine-looking, stalwart man, with a black mustache and piercing black eyes. He walked about the room, examining the system Vic used for sending off the goods. Finally he stopped before the boy, and asked him a trivial question. At the sound of his voice Vic looked at him sharply before he made any reply.

"Ah," he thought, "now I know whose voice it was that the masked man's resembled. Mr. Roundtree has just his figure, too. It's a wonder the detectives were never successful in rounding the rascal up."

Then he answered the vice-president's question politely. After that he furtively watched Mr.



Roundtree while he remained in the shipping department, and the longer he looked at him the more the gentleman reminded him of the rascal who had engineered the scheme for defrauding the company out of \$150,000 worth of bonds, besides stealing \$50,000 outright from the office safe. Of course it was preposterous to even think that Mr. Roundtree had any connection with such a piece of crooked business, so Vic dismissed the matter from his mind. A whole year passed away, and summer came around once more. The Duplex Manufacturing Company had grown in importance, and Vic's wages had been raised to \$18 per week. It was about this time that he ran across a great bargain in real estate. The trust company that acted as guardian for the boy had received an offer of \$20,000 for his property, and wrote to him advising him by all means to accept it. Vic wrote back that they could sell it for him. The day that he did so his attention was accidentally called to a tract of land which some speculators were negotiating for. They were anxious to buy the land, but were dickering over the price, which was really dirt cheap, and they knew it. Just the same they were hoggish in the matter, because they thought they had the inside track. Vic went and looked the property over, and then offered the owner his price.

"Whom do you represent?" asked the man, eager to close the deal.

"How does the Title Guarantee & Trust Company strike you?" asked Vic.

"They're good enough for anybody," said the man.

"All right," replied the boy. "I'll give you a note to the president. Take it down to their offices on Broadway to-morrow morning and the company will make arrangements with you."

Vic wrote a letter telling the company that he wanted to invest the proceeds of the sale of his present property in the new deal, which involved a matter of \$35,000. He wanted the company to advance him the amount necessary to secure an option on the new property, while they investigated the title, and closed out his other realty. His \$13,000 interest in his present property was security enough for the company to comply with his wishes, and the new deal was arranged. When the speculators found out that they were dished out of the land they had intended to cut up into building lots, improve and sell at a good price, they were madder than hornets. But they couldn't do a thing, except make a higher offer to the trust company, which was refused.

In due time Vic sold his first real estate investment and became owner of the \$35,000 plot of land, on which the trust company advanced the necessary \$22,000 on a first mortgage. This deal was purely speculative in character, as there was no income from it, and Vic had \$550 semi-annual interest to face, besides taxes and possible assessments. Jennie Butterick promised to see him through the deal if necessary, though he had no intention of calling on her to do so, if he could help it. He understood that the trust company would carry him. His plan was to hold the land a year or so, by which time he expected all property in that neighborhood would make a big advance. Before long he got an offer of \$42,000 for it, which showed him that he had made no mistake in buying it. Taking the above figures

as a fair indication of its present value, he allowed that his \$5,000 check from the company had, in one year, increased to \$20,000 through shrewd judgment in realty values.

## CHAPTER XVI.—Conclusion.

As Jennie Butterick had taken Vic under her wing, so to speak, he had entry into the best society of upper New York. She wouldn't have anybody else for an escort when she could get Vic to accompany her. Everybody said they made a very handsome couple, and not a few wise ones predicted a marriage in the future, in which they would figure as the principals. When the Christmas holidays came around again, Vic had passed his eighteenth birthday by a lap, while Jennie had arrived at sweet sixteen. Vic still boarded at the humble cottage of Mrs. Tarbox. She was as good as a mother to him, and the boy wouldn't have shaken her for the world. He was invited to eat his Christmas dinner with the Saunderses and Miss Jennie, and he wouldn't have missed it for a farm. Jennie had come to exercise a sort of proprietorship over him, and he enjoyed the sensation.

"I have an invitation to attend a masquerade ball at Mr. Sherwood's on New Year's night," she remarked to Vic on Christmas evening after dinner. The pair were sitting by themselves in the conservatory of the mansion, and the gas was turned down quite low.

"Have you?" answered Vic, thinking that his fair companion had never looked quite so pretty as she did that evening.

"Yes. Of course you're going with me," she said, in that decided tone she always addressed him, as if what she said went every time.

"Haven't I got anything to say in the matter?" he asked.

"Well, I'll permit you to say—yes."

"Thank you; you're getting liberal. Now, do you know, I've been thinking of asserting my independence," he said, quizzically.

"I have no objection to you being as independent as you wish, as long as you do everything I ask," she laughed.

"Come, now, I like that," he protested.

"I am very glad, indeed, that you like it."

"I like something better than that, though," he said, getting an inch closer to her.

"What is that?"

"Why, you, of course."

Jennie blushed and was silent.

"Do you know, Jennie, I've been thinking of realizing on some of my investments."

"Are you thinking of selling your land at this time?" she asked, in surprise.

"No. I mean my other investment."

"What is it?"

"That promise you made me a year and a half ago when I whistled back your ring and pocket-book that you thought were lost for good."

"Oh!" she exclaimed, somewhat wonderingly.

"Are you prepared to redeem that promise now?"

"What was it?"



"You promised to grant any little request I might ask you in the future. Don't you remember?"

"Oh, yes. Have you a request you want me to grant? If you have, consider it granted," she said, with a smile.

"Don't get reckless, Jennie. Better wait and hear what it is first."

"I'm listening."

"Jennie," he continued, earnestly, "you and I are good friends, but I am always worrying about how long it may be before you'll find somebody else that you will learn to like better than me. I hope you won't get angry with me for saying that the whole world is nothing to me beside you. I have learned to love you with all my heart. I want to prove worthy of winning you some day for my wife. Perhaps I oughtn't to talk this way to you, because of the difference in our social standing, and because we are both rather young to consider so serious a subject. But I cannot help it, Jennie. I must know whether you really care for me as I care for you. The request I make of you, and I do not insist on you keeping your promise to grant it, is that you tell me frankly if there is any hope for me to look forward to the realization of my fondest dream—that of winning your love and your hand eventually. That is all I have to say. I have opened my heart to you. If I have offended you I shall regret it, but I could not have acted otherwise."

Jennie's color came and went, and her bosom rose and fell with the emotion she was experiencing.

"What do you wish me to say?" she asked at length, in a low tone.

"Is there any hope for me to expect that some day you will become my wife?" he asked, with quivering lips, for the stake he was playing for was high.

"Yes," she whispered, and then she let her head drop on his shoulder. They went to the masquerade ball together in the Saunders automobile on New Year's night. There was a big crowd present at the Sherwood mansion. Every one was expected to be masked during the first part of the evening, and many were there in fantastic costumes. Vic had just finished a waltz with Jennie, who was dressed to represent Little Red Ridinghood, and he was leading her back to her seat when he came face to face with a masked man, who also wore a heavy brown beard. The boy gazed in bewilderment at the man, for he was the counterpart of the masked forger of months before.

"What's the matter, Vic?" asked Jennie.

"Nothing," he answered quickly, leading her to her seat. Then, excusing himself, he hurried off to find Mr. Sherwood. After some difficulty he located that gentleman, and told him what he had seen.

"You must be mistaken in your idea that that is the mask you saw on the rascal who put the forgery almost through. No one is present here to-night but those I should be able to identify as upright people if their masks were removed. My guests are all my personal friends."

"All right, sir," replied Vic, respectfully. "You ought to know; but how can you determine that it was not a close friend of yours who engineered

that forgery? The man has never been caught. Who could have had access to your vaults and safe but a man who knew the ins and outs of the Duplex Company's offices? Who would have undertaken such a scheme, with prospects of success, but a man closely identified with the business of the company? With your permission I am going to find out the identity of this man who wears the suspicious mask."

"You may do so, of course, but be careful how you manage it, Bell. I cannot have one of my guests offended."

Mr. Sherwood walked off, leaving Vic to consider how he was going to accomplish his purpose. As he turned away he ran into a small man in a dress-suit and a purple mask. The mask became dislodged, and Vic recognized the Pinkerton detective.

"I'd like to talk with you, Mr. Hawkshaw," said the boy.

They went downstairs to the deserted dining-room, where Vic took off his mask, so the detective could identify him, and then told him his suspicions.

"All right. You have furnished me with the clew I have wanted. Who do you suppose that gentleman is?"

"I think I can guess, Mr. Hawkshaw. It is Mr. Roundtree, vice-president of the Duplex Manufacturing Company."

"You are right. I have long suspected him to be the 'man behind' the forgery. Now I am sure of it. In his fancied security, he is wearing to-night the identical mask he wore when you were up against him. Also the same beard. It was a fool's trick, but there is always a time in a man's life when he makes a grievous mistake. Roundtree has made his, and it shall land him in Sing Sing."

An hour later a telegram was delivered to Ralph Roundtree summoning him to his home. As he stepped out of his automobile at his door, the Pinkerton man, followed by Vic, stepped up and arrested him. He was taken to the Tombs and locked up. Next day Hawkshaw visited Sing Sing and had an interview with Adam Bender. When the convict heard that Roundtree was in the Tombs he wilted and was induced to make a full confession. At the trial of Roundtree, Bender was permitted to turn State's evidence, and his testimony, in addition to Vic's evidence, sent the vice-president of the Duplex Manufacturing Company to Sing Sing for ten years. His wife felt the disgrace so keenly that she sold out everything and left the neighborhood. Mr. Saunders, at Jennie's request, loaned Vic the funds necessary to purchase Roundtree's block of Duplex stock, and the boy found himself in line for the presidency of the company.

That was ten years ago, and to-day Victor Bell, the proud and handsome husband of Jennie Batterick, is president of the Duplex Manufacturing Company, the biggest concern in its line of business in the United States. Who, then, shall say that Victor Bell hasn't made his mark in life?

Next week's issue will contain "HEIR TO A MILLION; or, THE BOY WHO WAS BORN LUCKY."



## CURRENT NEWS

## AT 63 SWIMS TEN MILES

Mrs. Anna Vanslike of Santa Monica, Cal., celebrated the 63d anniversary of her birth by swimming ten miles in the ocean. Just before finishing the swim she sang a verse of "The Star Spangled Banner" to show she was not exhausted and on leaving the water dressed without assistance. She was in the sea nine hours and twenty minutes.

She came here twelve years ago suffering from tuberculosis, according to physicians.

## ELECTRIC EELS HAVE POWER PLANTS

Attendants at the New York zoo having been stunned by current from the electric eel, an investigation has been begun of the creature's power plant. Previous attempts at measuring the current have failed because the apparatus used was not sufficiently sensitive to register the sudden and intense shocks delivered. These, according to Popular Mechanics, are said to be powerful enough to stun a horse and are described by keepers who suffered them as "sledge-hammer" blows that caused black and blue marks on the

skin. A German professor, according to R. L. Witmars, curator, has obtained light of dazzling intensity by connecting the current to the bulbs, but the flash was over in an instant, defying attempts to measure it.

## MEANEST MAN SOUGHT

All color barriers have been let down in Houston, Tex., for a time at least, and good citizens, both white and black, are scouring the city for a "jelly bean" who, they declare, is the meanest men here and whom they want to see punished. He was in a street car that passed along as Oscar Mayfield, a blind Negro, was waiting for it.

The Negro was depending on a six-year-old Negro boy to tell him when the right car came along. As he was standing there the "jelly bean" reached out and hit him in the eye with his fist, knocking him to the ground. The Negro was carried to the hospital seriously injured and the police dragnet has been put out for the "jelly bean," who was laughing as the car disappeared and the Negro lay prostrate.

## LOOK! LOOK! LOOK!

**"MYSTERY MAGAZINE"**

## No. 160 Is Now on the Newsstands

If you boys want to read some dandy stories, get a copy, and you will not regret it. Here is what it contains:

**"THE RIVER PIRATES"**

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"BY VIRTUE OF DISCIPLINE," by P. T. Raymond; "SLICK WALTON'S DECISION," by W. J. Campbell; "THE FALSE TRUTH," by John Holden; "THE HILLSBORO BANK ROBBERY," by Frank S. Sullivan; "THE HELPING HAND," by Arthur W. Beer; "THE MAN WHO WATCHED," by Arthur Lockwood.

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All Newsdealers Sell It



# Rob and the Reporters

— Or, —

## Hustling for War News by Wireless

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

### CHAPTER VIII.

#### Rob Gets His Baptism Of Fire.

When Rob reached the big tent he saw that there were several other smaller ones behind it.

Beyond these he saw women engaged in cooking, which was a relief when he thought of Edith.

Perhaps the brave girl read his thoughts.

"Cheer up, boys!" she whispered. "Put on a bold front as I intend to. They won't eat us, that's one comfort. I'm not a bit afraid."

"Look out for your money," said Rob.

"They'll get some of it, but I defy them to find all," was the reply.

There was no chance for further talk.

The officer now ordered them to leave the car.

Edith was put in charge of two soldiers and marched off among the tents, while Rob and Walter were taken inside the larger tent, where at a table littered with papers and plans sat a stout officer, with a fierce black mustache, whom Rob's captor saluted, saying, in German:

"These men with a young woman were captured on the road in a car. They are probably spies."

"If so, short work will be made of them," was the reply. "What are their relations to each other?"

The officer explained.

The big man, whom Rob subsequently learned was a Colonel Zimmermann, now proceeded to question him in English, which he spoke with scarcely any accent, along the same line as before.

"Let them be stripped and thoroughly searched, Captain Behrends," he then said. "If compromising papers are found on them, let them be instantly shot. Pass the word to have the same disposition made of the woman."

With this, the colonel resumed his work.

It was useless to protest, of course. Bob made no such attempt.

His papers had been carefully sewed into his clothes. He could only hope that they might not be discovered, while as for his money, which was in French notes, some of it was loose and some concealed as was the case with Walter.

Captain Behrends now took the boys into an inner compartment and told them to undress.

There was no half-way work about it. They were forced to strip to the buff, and every article of clothing was carefully examined.

It was a ticklish moment.

Rob's courage almost failed him when the captain began work on his coat.

But, though the examination was most thorough, he failed to find the papers, yet, singularly enough, he discovered the hiding-place of the money, which he calmly pocketed.

Walter's hidden store, on the contrary, escaped.

"Apparently you have spoken the truth, Mr. Randall," remarked Captain Behrends, at last, "and it is well for you that it is so. You two will remain prisoners of war until further orders."

"And my money?" asked Rob.

"Confiscated. Such is the rule."

"Miss Morley —"

"Not in my hands. I have nothing to do with her case."

"I suppose there is no chance of recovering my car?"

"Not the slightest. All cars are commandeered. Dress and follow me."

He stepped back into the main tent as he said this, leaving the boys to themselves.

"Gee, you're in luck!" breathed Walter.

"Hush! Hush!" whispered Rob.

"We seem to be up against it hard," he said aloud. "I wonder what they intend to do with us?"

"You can search me," sighed Walter. "Upon my word, I believe we would have done better if we had passed as Americans."

Captain Behrends now returned.

"What's your name?" he asked Walter, who told him.

"Can you cook?"

"After a fashion. I have done camp-cooking."

"Good. You will be put at work with the cooks until your master's case is decided. Remain here. Mr. Randall, follow me."

Rob was taken to the guardhouse—a large tent at the other end of the encampment—where he found several Belgian prisoners.

There were no seats, simply an improvised table, on which some of the prisoners were sitting.

They appeared to be all of the peasant class. None of them could speak English.

Some hours passed. After dark a scanty, badly-cooked supper was served, after which the Belgians stretched themselves on the ground and fell asleep.

Rob followed their example later, taking off his coat and using it as a pillow.

It was a long time before he slept, but he did finally.

Several times during the night he was awakened. At last, at daybreak, he fell into a deep sleep from which he was aroused by the boom of cannon.

He sprang up, as did all the others.

Shot after shot was fired. They could hear horsemen dashing madly about, officers shouting orders, and so on.

Evidently the camp had been attacked and an engagement was on.

Rob ventured to look outside at last.

The guard had vanished.

(To be continued.)



## GOOD READING

## BALKY SPIRITS REFUSE TO ENTER COURT ROOM

W. W. Aber of Portland, Oreg., spiritualistic medium accused of fraud, attempted to give a demonstration before a jury in Circuit Court of his ability to materialize a spirit, but after an hour's effort gave it up, saying the atmosphere of the court was too stuffy and not sufficiently harmonious to permit a successful test.

The seance had been arranged at Aber's request. A cabinet was set up. The lights were dimmed. There was a wait. It grew and extended. Nothing happened, and finally Aber announced he would give it up. Then he collapsed.

## ORIENTALS THINK FOXES ENTER HUMAN BODIES

Foxes have a terrifying effect on the imagination of superstitious Orientals. A fox will enter a human's body—between the finger nails and the skin, they say—and, having made itself at home, will control the person's thoughts, actions and even his voice, leading him into deviltries for which he feels he cannot be held responsible. To thus be inhabited by a fox—or rather by the spirit of the fox—is to suffer from what is recognized as the demoniacal possession, says the *Detroit News*.

We are told "that the person possessed hears and understands everything that the fox inside him says or thinks; and the two often engage in violent dispute, the fox speaking in a voice altogether different from that which is natural to the individual," and scientifically we have it explained that "whereas in healthy persons one-half of the brain alone is actively engaged—in right-handed persons the left half of the brain, and in left-handed persons the right—in nervously excitable persons or in persons of weak minds the disused half of the brain is often aroused into activity by fear, and the two halves, now functioning—one, the normal self, and the other, the new pathologically affected self—are set one against the other, the result being that the activities of the 'new' brain are ascribed to the fox."

## CIGAR STORE INDIAN ONLY A MEMORY NOW.

Somewhere in the cellars of New York are the remains of a large tribe of American Indians. Those that have escaped the fire and smoke of total destruction bury their noses in the city's rubbish heaps. Only half a dozen lone survivors of the lost tribe stare solemnly and sadly before tiny tobacco shops in obscure side streets.

What happened to the Indians that were once so essential to the tobacco dealer as the striped pole to the barber and the three gold balls to the pawnbroker? Why were they torn from their proud posts and relegated to oblivion? City authorities are partly to blame, according to one old-time dealer, who bemoaned the loss of the Indians as he caressed limp leaves of tobacco spread on his knee preparatory to a hand-made cigar.

"When I moved from my old shop," he explained, "I had to leave my Indian girl behind in the cellar. They wouldn't let me put her up

again here. It's a great pity. We used to have lots of fun with the Indians when I was a boy.

"Once a bunch of us played such a joke on a visitor! We asked him if he didn't want to go to Brooklyn to meet a nice girl. After we took him all the way over there we introduced him to an Indian girl in front of a cigar store. We had a big laugh. But that's all over now. You don't see any more Indians."

Throughout the country the wooden Indians are almost as scarce as in New York. Hundreds, even thousands, of them have passed from the scene. The pipe of peace and the Indian's love for the weed, it is said, led originally to the use of the symbol. The passing of the figures is attributed to the introduction of a new tradition in the tobacco business, wiping out old standards and sweeping symbolism with them.

"In a city like New York I doubt if you could get away with an Indian in front of your shop," an official of a large group of chain cigar stores explained. "If you even so much as put a box out in front you will get a summons next day. But that is not the only reason why the Indians disappeared. The modern tobacco shop brought a new idea into the business about twenty years ago. It stands for cleanliness, efficiency, and the thought of serving customers quickly. The old tobacco shop was a different sort of place; a loafing place where men loitered and gossiped and no one was even in haste. In changing all this the modern chain stores did away with the old decorations, other shops followed their lead and the Indians became extinct."

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# INTERESTING RADIO NEWS AND HINTS

## SINGLE TUBE LOUD-SPEAKER SETS

Single tube loud-speaker sets should be taken with a grain of salt. Of late there has been an epidemic of single-tube receivers for which the claim is made that they will operate a loud-speaker. In the case of the reflex single-tube sets, there is a possibility of operating a loud-speaker under favorable conditions, especially if the sets are carefully made with nothing but the best parts. Super-regenerative single-tube sets may also be made to operate a loud-speaker, but here the feat is accomplished at the expense of clarity and quality of tone. After all is said and done, the easiest and most satisfactory way of obtaining loud-speaker results is to build or buy a three-tube set.

## THE INTERFERENCE PROBLEM

The interference problem is in a fair way to solution in the near future. The interfering spark transmitters of ship stations operating within the broadcasting wave-length band are being transferred to a higher wave-length well outside the broadcasting band. Meanwhile other phases of broadcasting interference are being dealt with by experts, particularly radiating receivers. Manufacturers are being asked not to produce radiating receivers. Publications are being asked not to publish diagrams and instructions on the construction of radiating receivers. The public is being taught the necessity of making all receivers non-radiating, to the end that the shrieks and whistles and growls of the air may be disposed of in the very near future.

## ONE ANTENNA TO SERVE MANY

New York is covered with a network of copper wires hanging over the roofs of apartments, all because each receiving set requires an individual antenna. This great copper web may soon disappear, as naval radio experts have developed a "coupling-tube unit," which allows one antenna to serve several receiving sets. It is reported that this device will be available to the public shortly after June 1.

Inventors of the device are Dr. A. H. Taylor and L. C. Young of the Naval Laboratory at Bellevue, Md. After the apparatus was perfected it was tested on board the U. S. S. Colorado. A coupling-tube unit, connected between each receiving set and a single antenna, enabled operators to copy simultaneously incoming messages from stations using different wave lengths and at the same time the battleship's transmitter was in action.

## POTENTIOMETER VARIES VOLTAGE

It is often required to connect a variable source of voltage in the grid circuit of a vacuum tube. The idea is to supply a convenient arrangement for giving the grid a variable potential. In order to get a fine adjustment a potentiometer is connected across the filament or A battery, which is generally of the four- or six-volt type. The resistance may not be high since the current through the potentiometer resistance will always

be small compared to the current through the filament of the tube.

The resistance may be as low as 200 ohms, but many potentiometers have a resistance of 400 ohms. A battery is connected in the circuit and may be either fixed or variable in type, depending upon the voltage required for the potential placed on the grid.

This arrangement is useful when carrying on experimental work and becomes an exceedingly important element when employing radio frequency amplification.

## SPARK INTERFERENCE

Spark interference has been all but totally eliminated during the past month or two, thanks to the active work of the Radio Club of America and the co-operation of Government officials and radio communication companies. A recent conference in New York City resulted in the abolishing of the 460-meter wave sometimes used in ship-to-shore radio work. This wave fell in the middle of the present broadcasting band and caused some pretty mean interference for radio programs. Of course, this change helps matters a great deal—conditions had become almost intolerable in the vicinity of New York City, due to spark interference. However, it must be remembered that the ruling made by the conference does not apply to hundreds of foreign ships which will operate the same as before. Furthermore, many of our ship and shore stations are equipped with the old-style spark sets which will continue to interfere with broadcasting reception at short distance until such apparatus has been replaced by the sharply-tuned continuous-wave transmitters.

## "MONITORING" IN BROADCASTING

One of the very necessary tasks connected with broadcasting is that of "monitoring." In every first-class broadcasting station there will be found some young man intently watching the fluctuating needle of a meter, and constantly manipulating a control knob. This "monitoring" has to do with overcoming the wide variation in volume which must be handled in the case of certain musical instruments. For speech, the variation in average power is of the order of 1,000 to 1. In music, and especially that such as given by a symphony orchestra, the energy variation between the softest and the loudest passages may be as great as 100,000 to 1. In the present state of the electrical art it is not practicable to handle such an enormous range of volume of broadcasting. This limitation arises not so much from the capacity of the broadcasting apparatus as from the existence of extraneous noise. The softest musical passages when broadcast must be made sufficiently loud to override static and other electrical interference in the ether, as well as receiving set noise and any incidental noise. When the softest passages are made loud enough to overcome such extraneous interference, it would be extremely expensive to provide the equipment for making the loudest



passages 100,000 times as loud. Consequently, good broadcasting requires a skilled listener and monitoring device at the point where the program is picked up. The function of this listener is to adjust the amplifier in the broadcasting system so that its output will take into account the changes in the loudness of the program. These changes in loudness must not be unduly reduced, but they must be made such as will carry to the radio audience without overloading any element in the broadcasting system.

### BATTERY CHARGERS

Direct current is still found in a great many homes, and the owner of a radio set living in one of them often finds the problem of charging his storage battery a very serious one, as most commercial chargers are for alternating current only. However, a simple outfit for this purpose can be made at home from standard parts which will work noiselessly and without trouble.

All that really is required is a bank of house lamps. They should be of the old-fashioned thirty-two candlepower carbon type, as these are cheaper and serve the purpose just as well. Each bulb passes about one ampere of current, so not more than five, or six at the most, can be used, as the ordinary house wiring cannot stand the passage of a greater current than six amperes with safety.

If the battery is of sixty ampere-hours or less, this number will be plenty.

A heavy double-pole, double-throw, porcelain base knife switch and a charge and discharge battery meter are also necessary.

The arms of the switch are connected directly to the posts on the battery through the ammeter. One set of the switch jaws goes to the receiving set. After completing this much of the wiring, the switch should be closed and the bulbs lighted to test the connections of the meter.

If the needle reads to the "discharge" side, it need not be disturbed. If it reads "charge," the wires leading to the posts on the back simply should be reversed.

One side of the bank goes to one of the remaining free switch jaws. The other jaw is connected to the house current line. The two ends of wires can go to the two tips of a two-piece socket attachment plug. The latter is inserted in a lamp socket and two bulbs screwed down in their sockets. The switch is then thrown to the "charge" position.

If the meter reads to the charge side, everything is all right. If it reads the other way, the detachable half at the attachment plug is removed and then reinserted so that the prongs have changed positions. The meter will then read in the correct direction.

As the other lamps are screwed into their sockets, the meter reading will rise. It should be adjusted to the figure recommended by the manufacturer of the storage battery.

The wire used for connecting the various parts of the charger should be not less than No. 14 rubber covered.

The lamps should be enclosed in some kind of a metal wire cage, as quite a good deal of heat can also be provided as further protection.

All batteries are furnished with full charging

directions so no details need be given here on this process.

### THREE STAGES

When it is desired to operate a loud speaker on distant stations, or when enormous volume is required from local stations, it is often necessary to add a third stage of amplification. After the average signal passes through two stages or ordinary amplification, the energy is increased to such an extent that a third stage amplifier, of the same type, would be greatly overloaded, and this would result in distortion. The only way to overcome this difficulty is to use a power amplification after the first two stages of audio amplification.

The greatest difference in the circuit is the method in which the loud speaker is connected. A fixed condenser, having a capacity of from one to four mfd., is connected between the phones and the plate of the tube, and the "B" battery is connected to the plate through a thirty-henry choke coil. The reason for this arrangement is to keep the "B" battery current out of the loud speaker, as this makes it possible for the loud speaker windings to carry more useful energy without being overloaded.

The thirty-henry choke coil that is used in this circuit may be purchased from some radio dealers, but usually they are rather difficult to locate. A very satisfactory substitute for a standard choke coil is the primary winding of an ordinary house bell-ringing transformer, and these transformers may be obtained for about \$1.50 in any electrical store. The fixed condenser is an ordinary telephone condenser and may be obtained from either an electrical store or a radio dealer.

The amplifying transformer used in a power amplifier of this type must be of the shell type, i. e., the windings should be mounted in the center of the core instead of on the legs. The ratio of this transformer should not be greater than 4:1, and in many cases a transformer with a ratio of 3½:1 or 3:1 will give better reproduction. In connection with the amplifying transformer a 1 to 2 megohm grid lead should be connected across the secondary windings in order to prevent excessive voltage amplification; which would result in distortion.

A power tube must be used in a power amplifier, as the ordinary amplifier tube would be greatly overloaded, and of the available tubes either the VT-2, the UV-202 or C-300 should be selected. The plate voltage to be used on these tubes should not be less than 120 volts if good amplification is desired, and a "C" battery should be connected in the filament circuit to prevent the grid from becoming positive. For a 120-volt "B" battery the "C" battery voltage should be between six and nine volts, the correct value to be determined by experiment.

In wiring the amplifier care should be taken to keep the grid and plate wires as short as possible, and separate from all other wiring and instruments. The wires in the battery circuit should be kept parallel and direct from one point to the other. An endeavor should also be made to prevent any inductive loops in the wiring. Another thing that will also frequently improve the quality of amplification is grounding the core of the amplifying transformer.



# Fame and Fortune Weekly

NEW YORK, JUNE 27, 1924

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## ITEMS OF INTEREST

### LONDON'S \$1,000,000 AQUARIUM

A new million dollar aquarium has been erected by the Zoological Society for their gardens in Regents Park. The building contains 900 tanks and shows nearly every kind of living fish. The tanks are filled with water brought from the Bay of Biscay, which, with scientific aeration and filtering, will last for years.

### OLYMPIC GAMES HELD IN RUINS OF POMPEII

The Royal University of Naples a few days ago celebrated its 700th anniversary. The festivities were inaugurated by King Victor in the San Carlo Theatre. Olympic Games were held in the amphitheatre at the ruins of Pompeii by squads from the various Italian universities.

Ancient rites of Partenope (the Greek Naples) were reconstructed in the twilight, giving a most picturesque effect amid the ruins. The rites included the "lampadedromiae"—the symbol of transmission of life and science from one generation to the other.

Seven groups, each consisting of five beautiful girls dressed in ancient Roman costumes, were formed. The first five each held a flaming torch. The group of girls ran to the next group of five and handed the torches over. The second group thereupon ran to the third, passing the torches on to them, and so on until the last group was reached.

### DIED AFTER FIRST BATH IN 40 YEARS

How two elderly men died in miserable circumstances associated with extreme poverty was referred to in the probate Court, London, when Mr. Justice Hill granted an application to appoint a receiver in the estate of Willand Thomas Brissenden of New street, Westminster, S. W.

Last December William Brissenden died as the result of having his first bath for 40 years, which was ordered by the sanitary authorities. Thomas died two months ago at the age of 60, from the results of starvation. It was stated by a doctor at the time that he had probably had no food for a week. At the time he had about \$300 in his possession.

The two brothers, who lived and died in this wretched manner occupied their own house, a neat little brick building of four stories, and they are believed to have had other houses in the neighborhood.

It appears that despite the money they had at their disposal the two brothers reduced their expenditure to the minimum. William was a familiar figure in Westminster. A bearded man, he wore a very patched coat, and no collar or tie, and went for a walk in Vincent square every day. His brother, however, rarely went out except at night.

A local baker used to deliver a loaf of bread a week. It is not known what other eatables the brothers had, and it is thought that they subsisted largely on bread. It is even said that one of them went out picking up cabbage leaves in the neighboring street.

## LAUGHS

Molly—Do you know I called to inquire for that rich uncle of mine this afternoon and found that he was a great deal better. —Kate—Now, didn't I tell you not to call on Friday? Friday's always an unlucky day.

Fond Father (trembling with emotion)—You are audacious! You are heartless! She is my only child! Suitor (wishing to pacify)—But, my dear sir, you—er—you can't blame me for that.

"Yes," said the man who had been traveling in the Far West. "I saw three trains held up in one night." "You don't say!" exclaimed the innocent bystander. "Was anyone hurt?" "No," answered the traveler. "They were held up by women in a ballroom."

"Your business college for young ladies seems to be all right." "It is all right." "Do you give the girls a good practical business training?" "In reply to that question I can only say that 60 per cent. of our graduates marry their employers the first year."

"Let me illustrate the difference between capital and labor," said the rich uncle to the impecunious nephew. "Suppose I give you \$500—" "That's capital," replied the nephew, extending his hand for the money.

"Do you know, Sam, that a man does not have to do as much work now as he did ten years ago?" "Yes, sah, I know it, sah. Why, I've been married nearly eight years, sah!"

"Tommy," said the hostess, "you appear to be in deep thought." "Yes'm," replied Tommy. "Ma told me somethin' to say if you should ask me to have some cake or anythin', an' I bin here so long now I forgit what it was."

"I hope," said the drummer, "you were satisfied with my report for the past month." "Well," replied the head of the firm, "there was one part of it that really exceeded our expectations." "And what was that?" "Your expense bill."



## BRIEF BUT POINTED

## A PAGODA

A pagoda is a Hindu place of worship containing an idol. It consists of three parts—an apartment surmounted by a dome resting on columns and accessible to all; a chamber into which only Brahmins, the Hindu priestly class, are allowed to enter, and a cell containing the statue of the Deity, this cell closed by massive gates. The most remarkable pagodas are those of Benares, Siam, Pogue, and particularly that of Juggernaut, in Orissa.

## CHICKS HELP PRUNE CROP

Henry Kleinsorge, an orchardist in Sutter County, Cal., raises chickens and prunes. When the frosts came Kleinsorge discovered that while the buds were destroyed on the prune trees in which there were no hens roosting, the crop on the trees in which they did roost was only partially damaged. He attributes this phenomenon to the warmth of the hens' bodies, which he believes appreciably raised the temperature among the branches.

## BRINGS DOWN HAWK 168 YARDS FROM HIM

While exercising his .22 rifle on the flat southeast of Belgrade, Mont., the other day, W. B. Wallace and two companions spied a sparrow hawk sitting in a tree about 100 yards away. One of the hunters tried a shot but missed, and the hawk flew to a tree down the field and considerably farther distant.

Mr. Wallace then drew a bead and fired. The hawk fell dead and the rifleman's friends came near pulling the same stunt.

The distance was then paced and proved to be 168 yards.

## LARGEST STORE OF CAVIAR

What is said to be the world's largest storehouse of caviar is situated in Hamburg, and administered purely as a Soviet Russian Government monopoly. It is from this storehouse that virtually all shipments of this favorite relish of kings and czars of olden times are sent to New York, Paris, London and other centers. The fish roe, pressed and salted, is shipped from Petrograd in barrels, packed away here in a central warehouse, and then sold according to the demands of the trade, says the *Detroit News*.

Caviar to-day is one of the most expensive luxuries of European tables, that is, outside of Russia. In Berlin it retails at about \$22 a pound. In Petrograd or Moscow it is one of the favorite dishes of the workingman, who takes home a mess of it two or three times a week at a dollar or so for all that he and his family can consume at the evening meal. The roe is eaten with bread and washed down with wines aged in cellars of the wealthy long before the Soviets came into power.

## ABUNDANT SUPPLIES OF FOOD ARE FOUND ON OCEAN SURFACE

The surface waters of the sea in all parts of the globe abound in microscopic floating life which can be collected by towing a net of close mesh through the water indeed, it has been said that a man on a raft with a silk handkerchief never need starve, writes George F. Sleggs, B. So., in "The London Daily Mail."

Many of the micro-organisms possess tiny shells of mineral matter, which are often very beautiful on account of their graceful outlines, the sculpturing upon the shell, or the spines and projections which it bears to lessen the rate of sinking through the water.

Now when the micro-organisms die, their shells, which are imperishable, start upon the long, slow, downward journey. They descend gradually in the warm surface layers of water till they reach the limit of sunlight.

This is usually at a depth of a hundred fathoms and here the water turns suddenly colder and, therefore, more viscous. So that the hosts of falling shell-pecks are halted in their rate of tumble. This lower limit of the twilight zone in the sea is called the mudline, and it is a great feeding ground for the scavengers of the deep.

The myriads of shells, however, pass the mudline and continue their laborious descent through the waters, now in darkness save for the gleams of phosphorescent light.

But while they are falling, fathom after fathom, the sea water is slowly but surely dissolving their substance away. First to go are the calcareous shells (consisting of carbonate of lime). If the sea is not more than 2,000 fathoms deep the calcareous shells will reach bottom safely, and, collecting in a layer there, will be preserved from further solution by those that follow.

Thus it comes about that down to a depth of 2,000 fathoms or so the great abyssal plain is covered with a grayish-white deposit of chalky mud, known as the globigerina ooze. The name is derived from the organism globigerina, whose shell preponderates in numbers over all others. Observations made in the work of laying and taking up cables in the Atlantic have shown that the rate of deposition of globigerina ooze may be as high as one inch in ten years.

Then there is the radiolarian ooze, another very important deep-sea deposit. The radiolarians have shells not of lime but of silica. Silica is the substance of which sand is largely composed, and it is far more resistant to the solvent action of sea-water than is carbonate of lime.

At greater depths than 1,000 fathoms on an average the globigerina shells are all dissolved before they reach the bottom, but the radiolarians are still sinking and form radiolarian ooze in the deeper parts of the abyss. Even the glassy radiolarians are dissolved in sinking to very much greater depths, and in the deepest region of all the ocean bed is covered with red clay in which living remains are scanty.



## ITEMS OF INTEREST

**MACHINE GUNNERS GUARD \$100,000,000 ON STREETS**

Stowed away in little steel boxes \$100,000,000 was transported through the streets of New York for more than a mile the other afternoon, locked in armored cars and guarded by a squad of sharpshooters armed with machine guns. The treasure was moved from the old Greenwich Savings Bank at 6th ave. and 16th st., Manhattan, to the new building of the bank at 36th st. and 6th ave.

There were 25 motortruck loads and each truck carried several millions of dollars.

**NEEDLE IN WOMAN'S FOOT**

Mrs. W. B. Tillett, of Manteo, N. C., came to Norfolk a few days ago and had a needle removed from her foot, where it had been hidden for twenty seven years.

Doctor had treated her for years for rheumatism, despite the fact that Mrs. Tillett believed that the pain she endured was caused by a needle that became embedded in her foot when she was a young girl running around her home in her bare feet.

Doctors said she imagined she had stepped on a needle and they contended that an examination of her foot failed to disclose the hidden piece of steel.

Mrs. Tillett decided she would come to Norfolk and have an X-ray photograph of her foot made. The picture showed the needle near her ankle. It had worked its way from the sole of her foot, where it entered, to a point just above the angle, a distance of about seven inches.

**PLATINUM FOUND IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Prospective brides and bridegrooms, chemists, scientists in general and dentists and their patients will all be affected by the recent discovery of platinum in the Transvaal in quantities which are expected to be large enough to reduce materially the price of the precious metal. An authoritative account of the field and of its possibilities by P. A. Wagner of the Geological Survey, and T. G. Trevor, Inspector of Mines, appears in a recent number of the *South African Journal of Industries*.

The discovery was made last summer by Adolph Erasmus, a well-known prospector. He was looking for tin at the time, and was, in fact, going over a region that had been repeatedly prospected for both gold and tin without any platinum having been found. The discovery, says the article, "shows how largely blind fortune enters into these things, and how sometimes one discovery leads to another."

The farm on which the discovery was made had been proclaimed as a public gold field in the early days. Mr. Erasmus thought there might be more tin there and proceeded to make a few tests.

Almost the first panning yielded not only a few specks of gold but a "tail" of grayish white con-

centrates that lagged behind the gold in the pan. Reasoning that since platinum is the only metal he had heard of that was heavier than gold, and that these residues must be heavier than the gold and therefore probably of platinum, Mr. Erasmus immediately communicated with his principal. Investigation showed platinum present in workable quantities, the first discovery of commercial quantities of the metal in Africa.

Several companies are now exploiting the deposit, which is situated in the Waterberg district, about 100 miles north of Johannesburg. The lodes are known to extend for a distance of ten to fifteen miles, with many surface outcrops. The ore averages about nine troy ounces to the short ton, although some samples have yielded as high as 137 ounces. The yield generally is very variable.

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## UNDER-GROUND SEA IN SAHARA

There is animal life 200 and 300 feet beneath the burning sands of the Sahara Desert. That is the amazing discovery made through experiments of sinking artesian wells at various points in the North African waste with a view to possible irrigation. Waters drawn from great depths were found to contain small crabs, fish and shell fish, all perfectly alive. The discovery is proving an absolute puzzle, no theory so far seeming entirely satisfactory.

Usually it has been possible to explain the presence of fish, etc., in underground waters in the fact that they were locked up during some primeval cataclysm. Adapting usually to conditions these animals living in darkness are always blind entirely or possess special optical apparatus suitable to darkness. Those found underneath the Sahara belong to a species inhabiting the lakes of Palestine.

Shafts sunk during the last few years in the Sahara prove there are large sheets of water everywhere. Animals found now cause the belief there is a vast underground sea, densely inhabited.

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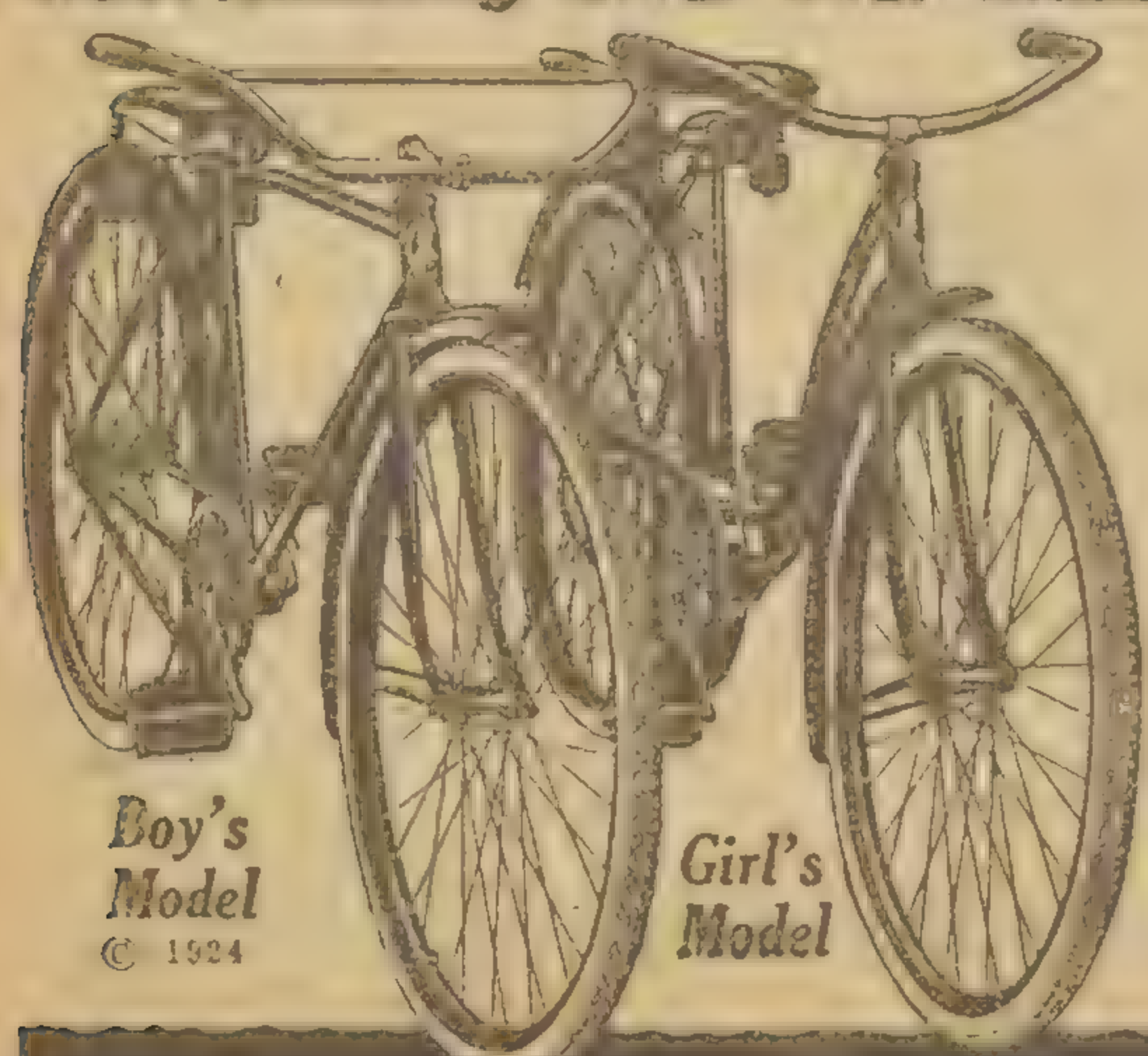
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